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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

TOLERANCE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:
THREE DISSENTING WORLDVIEWS IN CANADIAN EDUCATION

BY

ARY DE MOOR

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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IN

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled, "Tolerance In Religious Education: Three Dissenting Worldviews in Canadian Education", submitted by Ary De Moor in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Education, in Philosophy of Education.

Dr. Foster Walker
(Supervisor)

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DATE: July 14, 1994

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ABSTRACT

A major goal of the Canadian education system is the growth of tolerance and understanding. Defining tolerance and understanding to eliminate problematic ambiguity is philosophically necessary but difficult. Provincial government initiatives to foster the growth of tolerance and understanding have experienced limited success, particularly in religious education, since Canadian schools today are influenced by contrasting basic beliefs. Underlying the problems here are three differing worldviews namely, the Thomist (as in many Roman Catholic schools), the liberal (as in many public schools), and the Calvinist (as in some independent/private Christian schools). These worldviews differ in their view of the nature of God, the role of individuals in society and the distinctive function of schooling, and therefore they generate three overlapping yet distinct philosophical views of tolerance in religious education: teaching of religion (Thomist), teaching about religion or the avoidance of religion (liberal) and teaching through religion (Calvinist). Although these three philosophical views of tolerance have much in common, that which distinguishes one from the other explains why issues of tolerance in religious education frequently cause intense controversy in formulating school policy and in practice.

The liberal worldview is increasingly replacing Christian ones in Canadian public education. However, efforts to maintain religious education of any kind in public schools are failing the liberal test of tolerance. This failure results, in many cases, in the demise of religious education through curricular neglect and judicial rulings.

The possibility of Thomist and Calvinist worldviews providing philosophically and historically suitable bases for tolerant religious education programs in Christian schools has been challenged on the grounds that they are indoctrinative and thus promote intolerance. Their right to existence has been questioned in the name of promoting tolerance and understanding. Specific examples from Alberta and Ontario illustrate the history of this philosophical debate.

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM OF TOLERANCE IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Introduction - Stating The Question

Life never wends its way in neat packages. If it did, there would be little room for creativity or love. Nowhere is this more evident than in the raising of children; they deserve the very best we have to offer. Parents choose what they see as best for their children and trust that others, charged with their care, will do the same. But deciding what is best is hardly ever tidy as any parent can testify. At times parents follow their instincts while on other occasions the reasoned wisdom of the ages is not sufficient to guarantee the desired result. What is planned is not always what happens - sometimes that's good, sometimes not.

If parenting is an imprecise science, teaching is too. Standing in the place of parents in front of twenty-five warm bodies and creative souls is a craft which requires practising one's teaching skills with care, always mindful of a millstone hanging around one's neck. The expectations of the parents, the needs of the individual child, the concern for the class as a group, the government exams and the self-imposed and professional standards all impinge on what a teacher does between Monday morning and Friday afternoon.

Educational philosophy aims to provide a conceptual road map for parents and teachers. If it were a printed atlas with roads and goals clearly spelled out, life would be easier but far less satisfying. Deciding the destination and the way to go is half the challenge; getting there is seldom easy. So it is with the aims and goals of education, the curriculum and the pedagogy in use. Tempting as it may be to deliver tidy

philosophical packages, reality rears its unpredictable head too often to allow simplistic answers. Although, like the caretaker in a school, the educational philosopher does not have direct control of the classroom, s/he knows what needs to be said from time to time and doesn't hesitate to do so. Even though final certainty and decision-making may elude the philosopher, the tools provided and the questions posed by philosophy provide understanding and, hopefully, wisdom to parents and teachers. Here, that potential will again be tested.

This thesis examines tolerance regarding religious education; a topic of broad history and extended philosophical controversy yet simply illustrated when a child asks her teacher if God really did create the world and then goes home to tell her parents what 'teacher said'. The term religious education is here used to refer to programs and practices in schools which deal with people's beliefs concerning the ultimate meaning and purpose of life and the implications of these beliefs for how people's lives ought to be lived.

The philosophical brushes used will at times be too broad to square with all the facts and at times be too narrow to encompass the complexities. When using descriptions of Calvinist, Thomist and liberal worldviews to offer philosophical explanation, one of necessity must generalize. When dealing with the acts of one individual at a specific time, one of necessity must allow for interpretations beyond what appears on the surface. The question that begs for greater understanding in a spirit of creative solutions and love for others is this: What is tolerance and why is it such a lightning rod when it concerns religious education in Canadian schools?

Illustrating The Problem - Some Alberta Examples

In February of 1984, the newly formed Alberta Committee on Tolerance and Understanding met to discuss their prize case of intolerance in private schools - a Christian high school sociology textbook (De Moor, 1980). It taught students in Christian schools that Christianity was the true religion and that all others were false. This so angered the Committee's chairman Ron Ghitter that he, without any authority of the magistrate, ordered that the book not be used in Alberta Christian high schools. It formed the basis of a claim made in the Committee's first publication (Ghitter, 1984a) that private religious schools are by nature and in practice intolerant. At the hearing, the editor of the offending textbook questioned Mr. Ghitter's view of tolerance but could not convince Mr. Ghitter nor the Committee to tolerate the point of view that Christian schools must teach Christianity to be the Truth. What was at stake was the right of religious schools to educate in and through their religious beliefs. Mr. Ghitter's comments gave the clear impression that religious tolerance was only possible within the public school system in which shared experiences promote tolerance and understanding while questions of ultimate truth and meaning should be left unaddressed or at least, unanswered.

Ten years after the work of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding in Alberta was completed and many of its recommendations implemented, the Edmonton Journal published a lead story on December 8, 1993 entitled, "Religion no longer in spotlight: The changing face of Christmas concerts" (McConnell, 1993). It speaks of the dilemma faced by public school officials who wish to stage Christmas concerts in

a multi-faith school. Says the article:

> In neighbourhoods across the city, principals and teachers search for a mix that allows Joy-to-the-World traditionalism without offending those who don't believe "the Lord is come". Not all cultures believe in the holiness of the birth of Jesus. But most children, whatever their background, share in the spirit of the festive season. The trick is to include everyone. (p. A-1)

The article goes on to describe how tree trimming and Christmas carols are potential pitfalls. Traditional Christmas concerts are becoming winter concerts which highlight multicultural music, food and dress. Biblical teachings are replaced by generalized and sanitized messages of peace and joy, delicately treading a middle ground. Since 'there are no board regulations', principals try to balance their concerts in tune with stated individual objections and perceived community desires. As one principal says, "I haven't had any parents complain yet. We'll see" (ibid.).

Seven pages later, the Alberta School Boards' Association, in response to massive budget cuts announced by the Government of Alberta, suggests that all private school funding be eliminated in order to allow public schools to maintain their quality of education (ibid. p. A-7). Two months before this, the Alberta Teachers' Association ran an advertisement in The Edmonton Journal asking "Who deserves less?", complaining that funding of private schools endangered the public schools' ability, among other items, to provide annual Christmas concerts in public schools ("Who deserves", 1993, p. A-7).

These items suggest three important currents in Canadian education:

1. Public schools and their supporting constituency in Canada wish to promote religious tolerance while maintaining a semblance of Christianity but this is becoming

increasingly difficult to maintain.

2. The professed desire to promote greater tolerance in the public school system sometimes coincides with intolerance towards denominational Christian schools which are suspected of being indoctrinative and intolerant.

3. In the name of tolerance, public schools have moved from the teaching *of* the Christian religion to the teaching *about* all religions and are moving towards *avoiding* religion.

A Pattern of Striking Exceptions

Religious toleration has historically been a subject of controversy and confusion. Martha Nussbaum (1990), in her description of Aristotelian social democracy, shows how Aristotle made a strong case for structural pluralism and choice in which there is "a great deal of latitude left for citizens to specify each of the components more concretely, and with much variety, in their lives as they plan them" (p. 235). But a very striking exception in this latitude is religion to which the lawgiver is to give "no thought in the design of institutions, beyond, apparently some supporting of civic festivals...religion is seen as a sphere of local particularity" (p. 236).

St. Thomas Aquinas also seems to promote a very tolerant view of religious belief by stating that "These [the Gentiles] should in no way be forced to believe, for faith is a matter of the will" (Sigmund 1988, p. 61). Once again, a striking exception is made for:

> (O)ther unbelievers such as heretics and all apostates who once accepted and professed the faith. These are to be compelled, even by physical force, to carry out what they promised and to hold what they once accepted. (ibid.)

To this day, striking exceptions such as these, concerning religious tolerance, are made by those who are generally regarded as tolerant individuals or groups.

John Locke's A Letter Concerning Toleration is regarded as a milestone in the development of the modern view of tolerance (Locke, 1689). Although Locke makes a strong case for a generous position regarding religious tolerance and argues that "toleration be the chief characteristical mark of the true church" (p. 104), he too makes a striking exception which is conceptually inconsistent and which has added to the continuing confusion surrounding religious tolerance. He argues for a maximum separation of matters concerning church and state. He writes:

> The only business of the church is the salvation of souls.... The part of the magistrate is only to take care that the commonwealth receive no prejudice, and that there be no injury done to any man.... (I)f each of them (church and state) would contain itself within its own bounds, the one attending to the worldly welfare of the commonwealth, the other to the salvation of souls, it is impossible that any discord should ever have happened between them. (pp. 125,128,146)

Locke's consistency can be challenged when he also argues that:

> (T)hose are not at all to be tolerated who deny the being of God.... The taking away of God, though but even in thought, dissolves all.... (T)hose that by their atheism undermine and destroy all religion can have no pretence of religion whereupon to challenge the privilege of a Toleration. (p. 140)

Locke's words call to mind a cartoon in which a teacher who is charged with praying in school and thereby violating the separation of church and state is asked, in a civil court, to swear on a Bible that he will tell the truth. One cannot with consistency

argue separation of religion and matters of state while insisting on belief in God, as Locke seemingly does. Perhaps Locke's Theism was a necessary next step given the times in which he lived, but the influence of his work outlived his day and age.

Locke's call for the separation of church and state has been constitutionally enshrined in the United States and forms the basis of opposition to public (state) support of non-public (religious) schools. Although Canada has no such constitutional standard, many Canadians nevertheless argue that religion is a private matter and must not corrupt the educational process or institutions since, they claim, religion inevitably leads to intolerance.

For example, the Ghitter report stated without empirical evidence that:

> [Private school] students do not come to appreciate and understand the differences of other cultures, philosophies, and religions, with the result that there is a deficiency in the development of critical thinking skills, and a tendency to become partisan to their own belief system and degrading, intolerant or disrespectful of others. (Ghitter, 1984b, p. 106)

Although the final report of the Committee toned down the rhetoric, it still promoted "shared experiences" in the public school as the best means towards greater tolerance in education. It recommended the preferential funding of public schools over religious private schools as a means toward that end.

The Ghitter report's bias is not unusual. In Ontario, submissions to "The Commission of Private Schools in Ontario" stated that public funding of private religious schools:

> (W)ould sanction the isolation of students in homogenous groups and thereby not only abandon the advantages of a common acculturation experience but also foster a tendency among the students to think of other people as outsiders - an invitation to prejudice and intolerance.

(Shapiro, 1985, p. 47)

The Commission concluded that:

> (T)olerance and understanding are more likely to arise from settings in which various groups interact than in settings which are segmented and segregated ...[and] the context of the public school...is the most promising potential for realizing a future characterized by a more fully tolerant society. (ibid., p. 50)

The report did recommend the funding of alternative religious schools under the umbrella of the public school system, but this proposal has generally been dismissed as a viable option by private religious schools in Ontario.

Paul Hirst, a modern educational philosopher, who allowed for a significant role of religion in public schooling, nevertheless says concerning religious schools that:

> (S)uch schools necessarily encourage social fragmentation in the society along religious lines ...[and are] likely to be ghetto-istic, concerned to preserve the tradition against other possibilities, favouring a large measure of social isolation and possibly indifference, even hostility towards others. (Hirst, 1985, pp. 16-17)

The preceding instances of those who set out to promote tolerance in education seem to follow in the historical tradition of "striking exceptions" in the case of religious toleration. They seem to parallel the arguments parodied in Locke's Letter Concerning Toleration that say:

> Oh, but civil assemblies are composed of men that differ from one another in matters of religion; but these ecclesiastical meetings are of persons of one opinion...civil assemblies are open and free for anyone to enter into; whereas religious conventicles are more private, and thereby give opportunity to clandestine machinations. (pp. 140-41)

Locke counters such arguments:

> (A)s if an agreement in matters of religion, were in effect a conspiracy against the commonwealth...Believe me, the stirs that are made, proceed not from any peculiar temper of this or that church or religious society; but from the common disposition of all mankind ... there is one only thing which gathers people into seditious commotions, and that is oppression. (pp. 141, 142)

The Alberta Committee's and Ontario Commission's suggestion that tolerance is promoted when religious differences are homogenized or marginalized through "shared experiences" in public schools is itself a leap of faith in light of evidence which shows that such a strategy does not necessarily work any better to foster tolerance in public schools than in private religious schools. Both Thiessen (1987) and Van Brummelen (1990) present a summary of studies conducted in the United States and Europe which show the suspicion of religious schools as being inherently more susceptible to intolerance to be incorrect. Greeley and Rossi (1966, 1974) found no trace of a 'divisive' effect of Catholic schools, and actually found graduates from Catholic schools to be more tolerant than others (Thiessen, 1987, p. 81). Hornsby-Smith (1978) confirms this finding in Catholic schools in England and Wales and suggests that attendance at mixed (public) schools does not increase growth of tolerance. Thiessen also quotes Greer (1985) who found that students in Northern Ireland that were most favourably disposed to religion were also most tolerant of other religions. Countries such as the Netherlands, Denmark, Austria and Switzerland which have a long history of religious tolerance are ones which have experimented with religious pluralism in organizing schools (Thiessen, 1987, p. 82). In Canada, the existence of Catholic schools in each province has had no noticeable effect on the growth of intolerance in its students. Says the final report of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding

in Alberta:

> It is demonstrated by the Catholic schools in this province that a religious context for education does not, in and of itself, create intolerance or narrow-minded learning.
>
> There is no evidence to conclude that the existence of religiously oriented schools does, in and of itself, cause intolerance in Alberta. (Ghitter, 1984b, pp. 90,109)

Donald Erickson's 1979 survey of public and private schools in British Columbia indicated that "students in British Columbia's religiously based schools displayed less prejudice than their public school counterparts" (Van Brummelen, 1990). John Hiemstra (1993) analyzed the results of the 1984 Canadian National Election Study and concludes that "there is no strong relationship between religious schooling and increased prejudice. In general Roman Catholics, Protestants and Jews with religious schooling have the same, or if anything, better scores on (')like of Jews and non-whites(') than public school attenders. Neither religious schooling nor "segregating children into uniform schools appear to increase prejudice" (p. 15).

If fostering of shared experiences is meant to eradicate religious differences or distinctions through the educational process, intolerance is promoted. Alberta MLA Sheldon Chumir argued in the Legislature that "public schools were designed to mix children of different ethnic and religious groups and eliminate those differences" (Hansard, June 13, 1988). Neither the members of the Alberta Legislature nor the media challenged this concept of the purpose of public schooling, nor did ardent proponents of liberalism whose fundamental interests include the principles of freedom of expression and association. Surely, liberals must allow some to dissociate

themselves from such a school system without penalty or charges of isolation and indoctrination on the basis of such dissociation alone (Thiessen, 1993, pp 188-198).

The concept of "shared experiences" is pernicious if tolerance can only be achieved through religious relativism. As Thiessen argues:

> Religious tolerance...presupposes disagreement, and hence a negative attitude towards the beliefs of the person one is being tolerant towards. But epistemological relativism undercuts the very possibility of having a negative attitude towards others' beliefs. Thus...there is a logical incompatibility between tolerance and relativism. (Thiessen, 1987, p. 79)

It appears that there is no coherent argument to justify the "striking exception" by those who would promote tolerance in education about all matters except those concerning religion. One can only guess that the fervour with which Mr. Ghitter and others opposed religious schooling is an example of what John Paul II calls the paradoxical reality that "those who were once victims of various forms of intolerance can in their turn be in danger of creating new situations of intolerance" (Pope John Paul, 1991, p. 10).

Chapter one has illustrated the difficulties and confusions in defining tolerance regarding religious education, emphasizing that the issue has lengthy historical roots and continues to play a role in present day educational policy and practice. Easy answers are not available. Before tools for attempting to resolve the issue are suggested, it is instructive to take a closer look at the tolerance and understanding process in Alberta in order to understand its stated intent and its actual results.

CHAPTER 2

THE COMMITTEE ON TOLERANCE AND UNDERSTANDING IN ALBERTA

Introduction

During the early 1980's, the Government of Alberta responded to the discovery of racist teachings in an Alberta public school by appointing the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding (the Committee). The Committee studied the matter of racism, bias, tolerance and understanding in the school systems and recommended that changes be made to promote the growth of tolerance and understanding and to ensure that intolerance not be part of the mandated program nor of the authorized resources used in the schools. Chapter 2 will examine the report of the Committee, the recommendations it made, and the process of curriculum review which it set up. The research will determine to what extent Alberta Education's goal to foster tolerance and understanding particularly in matters of religion has been accomplished or thwarted through the process of selecting or deselecting authorized resources for teachers and students.

Historical Background

In 1983, James Keegstra, the mayor of Eckville, Alberta, and a teacher in the Lacombe County public school system was accused of racist teaching by using his teaching position to teach Jewish world conspiracy theories and to publicly question the truth of the extermination of six million Jewish people during the Second World War. On May 12, 1983, Alberta Premier Peter Lougheed directed the Minister of

Education:

> (T)o have a special review undertaken forthwith of our curriculum to ascertain if there are any practical changes which could be made that would foster greater tolerance and respect for minority groups in our society. (Ghitter, 1984b, p. 7)

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding chaired by Mr. Ron Ghitter and composed of representatives from education, business, human rights groups, ethnic groups and government was appointed to:

> (R)eview and suggest to the Minister of Education ways of fostering, in the school system, greater tolerance and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the dignity and worth of all individuals...and to supervise the curriculum review by Alberta Education in conducting an audit of the programs of studies, curriculum guides, textbooks and other learning resources approved for use by Alberta schools in order to determine the adequacy of the ways in which tolerance, understanding and respect for minority groups and individuals are addressed and fostered. (p. 9)

The Committee completed its task in December, 1984, and issued its final report containing recommendations for action. The results of the learning resources audit done by teachers and Alberta Education staff, were published in April 1985. Since that time, the process of selection and authorization of learning resources by Alberta Education is required to include a Tolerance and Understanding review prior to the authorization of any resource. The review examines materials as to their suitability in promoting tolerance and understanding in matters of age, gender, disability, race, socio-economic status, which are matters of birth and circumstance, and of political beliefs and religion, which are matters of choice.

The Curriculum Audit For Tolerance And Understanding

The audit involved approximately 350 teachers and Alberta Education personnel and included 2,155 learning resources in all subject areas. Resources were rated as either 'acceptable', 'acceptable with minor assistance', 'problematic', or 'unacceptable'. Unacceptable resources were immediately withdrawn while those judged to be acceptable with minor assistance or problematic, required revision or warnings when used in classrooms. A total of 2% of the resources were found to be problematic or unacceptable and reasons where provided in a Teacher Reference Manual (Alberta Education, 1985).

A review of the audit results indicates that most of the problematic and unacceptable texts were found to be wanting in matters concerning the depiction of native people, gender-role stereotyping and Canadian content. In matters of religion, the audit faults several resources:

> Gods, Greeks and Romans, Grade 6 Social Studies, for excluding the "creationist" theory. References to Christianity are factual, but do not explore the impact of beliefs and practices of Christians.
>
> Marooned: An Examination of Culture, Grade 7 Social Studies, for presenting religion merely as a mental need.
>
> Cities Are For People, Grade 3 Social Studies, for only dealing with one religion (Christianity).
>
> Families of Asia, Grade 6 Social Studies, for not presenting religious beliefs and social customs.
> (Alberta Education, 1985, pp. 40,42,32)

These examples indicate that the audit seriously considered the religion criteria and used it in a number of instances to call attention to the omission of religious

beliefs in presenting the lives and events of people around the world.

The Tolerance And Understanding Review Process

All resources authorized for use in Alberta schools must now submit to an authorization process which includes a Tolerance and Understanding (T+U) review. This review is conducted by teachers who are certified by Alberta Education by successfully completing a two-day training session. All prospective resources are classified as 'sensitive' or 'non-sensitive'. All non-sensitive materials are sent to one teacher for analysis while all sensitive materials are sent to at least two teachers. All sensitive materials are further analyzed by Alberta Education staff if deemed necessary by the first analyses. A T+U recommendation is then sent along with the material for approval by the Deputy Minister of Education. The T+U review is one of a number of analyses done and does not necessarily determine acceptance or rejection. Alberta Education T+U staff correspond with publishers to report the results of the T+U analysis if they see a need to do so (Interview #1). All the analyses done by teachers are confidential and not open for public review.

According to the Guidelines for T+U developed by Alberta Education, the general criteria for T+U include the following:

> Do the program documents and supporting materials contain either implicit or explicit statements, examples which promote tolerance, understanding and respect for individuals and groups?
>
> Do the program documents and supporting materials take advantage of content and strategies that can assist the teacher in dealing positively with tolerance, understanding and respect for others...[and do they] authentically describe beliefs and customs of minority groups and help

> students to realize that these beliefs and customs are important and meaningful to the groups who hold them? (Guidelines, 1984, p. 2,3)

The Focus Statements in regard to religious references asks that the materials:

> a) present the elements of religious belief and practice (such as spiritualism, belief, creation, worship, deity) in sensitive and respectful ways;
>
> b) present the religious beliefs of minority groups (such as fundamentalist view of creation) in sensitive and respectful ways;
>
> c) present the religious practices of minority groups (such as non-Christian worship and celebrations) in sensitive and respectful ways;
>
> d) present the views of those who profess no religious belief in sensitive and respectful ways. (p. 6)

In an interview with Alberta Education T+U staff, they also referenced as a guideline for their use the list of desirable personal characteristics of children, developed by Alberta Education in 1989 (Desirable, 1989). In addition to a long list of personal characteristics, the following statement serves as part of the preamble:

> The Alberta community lives with a conviction that man is unique and is uniquely related to his world. Generally, but not universally, this expresses itself spiritually, through the belief in a Supreme Being (e.g., God). Ethical/moral characteristics, intellectual characteristics, and social/personal characteristics must be treated in a way that recognizes this reality and respects the positive contribution of this belief to our community. (p. 1)

Given the criteria and goals outlined above, it would be reasonable to expect that resources and curriculum guidelines in Alberta would actively inform students of people's religious beliefs and would encourage students to share their diverse faiths in the classroom as a means of promoting tolerance and understanding. If this is not the case, one could expect that the T+U review process would point this out as part of its

mandated task of monitoring resources for all aspects of T+U. Further, if resources were found wanting in this area, one might expect to find examples of correspondence from Alberta Education T+U staff to publishers indicating such a weakness. Alberta Education T+U staff were unable to provide any such materials.

The Teaching of Religion in Selected Alberta Teaching Resources

A review of the courses of study offered in Alberta schools indicates that no courses regarding religion are offered at the elementary level. One optional course in grade 8 called Ethics deals, in part, with a study of comparative religions. Support resources are available. The high school courses include Religious Studies 15 and 25 which are described in a one page guideline and serve to allow Roman Catholic and private schools the option of offering credit for Biblical studies courses. No support materials are recommended.

Determining to what extent religion is dealt with in all K - 12 resources is an arduous task. For purposes of this study therefore, two areas of the curriculum were examined in which one might reasonably expect religious beliefs to be presented and discussed since each area covers a broad range of life experiences in which religious beliefs play a greater or lesser role for many people. One is the Language Arts reading program for elementary grades as represented by the widely used Impressions Series. The second is the student and teacher resources for the grades 11 and 12 Career and Life Management (CALM) course which is required of all students prior to graduation. These materials were reviewed for purposes of this study for instances in

which religion is mentioned in any way or for instances in which it is not mentioned at points where one could reasonably expect to find some mention of religious beliefs or practices. A search was also made for examples in which students or teachers are encouraged to discuss or research matters of faith or religious beliefs of any kind.

The Impressions Series For Elementary Language Arts

The Impressions Series of reading anthologies and student projects for elementary classrooms is widely used in Alberta schools. It has received wide attention by critics who feel it promotes beliefs related to New Age philosophy because of its emphasis on magic, witches, rainbows, unicorns, dragons, prisms, etc. The authors reject such claims of promoting New Age beliefs and it is here agreed that such an accusation cannot be maintained. However, the series does suffer from an almost total lack of references to religion as being meaningful in people's lives.

In reviewing five sets of student anthologies and teacher handbooks for grade 1 (Booth, 1984), almost no mention of religion is made although there certainly are appropriate occasions for doing so. Rainbows and unicorns are present throughout but are not explained in any manner. Stories concerning what people do all day, detailed descriptions of homes, and lists of bedtime practices make no mention of religious beliefs nor are any religious artifacts or rituals such as bedtime prayer mentioned or illustrated. Sunday is mentioned only once and is shown to be the last day of the week (as opposed to the first) and is a time to "explore nature in a park near my school" and to "yawn and stretch and stay in bed" (Booth, 1984, Good Morning

Sunshine, pp. 56,111). The story of Noah and the Ark is used to show how animals can get upset with each other when confined in close quarters. The animals are glad to get off the ark, but Noah and his wife sit down on the sundeck of the boat with beach chairs and a book and were "left in peace" ... until it starts raining again (Booth, 1984, Fly Away Home, pp. 42-49). This may be a creative teaching tool to spark the imagination, but it in no way is used as a discussion of the Biblical account of the flood.

A review of the grade 4 anthology, Cross The Golden River, reveals similar omissions. The book has been accused of being too New Age because of the overemphasis on witches, magic spells, rainbow goblins, magicians, wizards, rainbow cats, etc. The section on fantasy certainly does contain many such characters. None of these are explained in any way as religious expressions or experiences. Christmas Eve is mentioned in the midst of a tangle talk poem but has no stated significance for the celebration of the birth of Christ (p. 69).

"Look Through My Window" (pp. 184-234) is a section which tries to illustrate the importance of people and events in our early life. This is certainly an opportunity to deal with matters concerning religion. The only example is an excerpt from a story called "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" in which the Herdman kids who are uncultured, participate meaningfully in the production of a Christmas play - a delightful story with a solid religious message told in a humorous yet meaningful manner. The rest of the section is devoid of matters of faith, beliefs or religion. On page 256, in "The Stare of the Cat", the Japanese New Year is mentioned as a time in

which people make "prayers and offerings to the gods" and as a time when "perhaps the gods sent him [the cat] to look for us in our old age". These two exceptions are relatively trivial references to religion.

In the Teacher Resource Book, a description of nine to twelve-year-olds lists traits concerning curiosity, capabilities, the need for freedom, etc., but does not mention the formation of beliefs, faith or religious growth. The learning environment does require that, among many other things, "all cultures and beliefs are recognized and respected" (p.8). There is no further explanation of this goal nor is there any indication in the following pages that children have religious beliefs, have faith, or wish to express religious beliefs in classrooms or explore them in their creative activities. Believing religiously is apparently not thought to take part in the thought process nor does worship have any place in public or personal expression. A project on page 89 is suggested in which students are to study the traditions related to Halloween and are asked to share ideas about ghosts but not about the historical relationship of Halloween to All-saints day. The abolition of Halloween is to be debated. Customs related to Halloween in other countries is also recommended. The teaching suggestions for "The Best Christmas Pageant Ever" do not address Christmas or the meaning of Christmas at all. One suggestion is that a film "On the Twelfth Day" be shown in which "the familiar Christmas carol is interpreted humorously by live actors" (p.163). This is a prime opportunity to discuss Christmas or other religious festivals, but it is not recommended in any way similar to Halloween.

A grade 5 anthology and student project book, Thread The Needle, is also

relatively devoid of any religious references. A holy man is tossed a coin in exchange for a prayer for the hunt (p. 103). A section of The Lion, The Witch, and The Wardrobe, written by C.S. Lewis, a Christian author, is used but not explored in terms of its Christian themes even though it presents a good opportunity to do so. Christmas presents are featured in two sections (pp. 204,218) but are not discussed in any way related to religious celebration or meaning.

A grade 6 anthology, project book and teacher resource manual, Wherever You Are, are similarly devoid of religious references even though there are numerous occasions such as descriptions of family life, interviews with grandparents, and so on, that give opportunity for faith and beliefs to be mentioned. The only religious reference mentioned is Anne of Green Gables' nighttime prayer in which she asks God for a good home and for good looks. This is not dealt with in the suggested activities as a topic for discussion concerning prayer but there *is* specific mention of sex-role stereotyping concerning Anne's need to be beautiful.

For the purpose of this study, the sample was limited to these twelve anthologies, student project books and teacher resource manuals. They clearly do not show any significant interest or concern for religious experiences in peoples' lives nor do they encourage discussion amongst teachers and students regarding matters of faith and beliefs. If anything, religious experiences are, by implication, presented as trivial or of little consequence. Further research on these and other reading series may or may not confirm these conclusions.

Career And Life Management

The Career and Life Management (CALM) course is a required course for all students graduating from Alberta high schools. It addresses five main topics, namely, self-management, well-being, relationships, world of work and independent living. A student textbook and teacher resource materials were reviewed for matters concerning religion, beliefs, faith or values. The materials were written on or around 1988 and were subject to a Tolerance and Understanding analysis. In an interview with Alberta Education T+U officials, they could not remember any major obstacles in passing these materials successfully through the T+U review. The analysis presented here is therefore based solely on the content of the textbook and the teacher resource materials.

CALM teacher and student resources indicate that the purpose of the program is to take care of "what is important to students now" (Bessert et al., 1988, p. 3). Students are told that "the management of their lives necessitates acquiring basic skills such as speaking so others really listen, making decisions and setting goals, implementing plans, taking control of your health and well-being, making new friends and keeping old ones, landing that important job, surviving in the market-place and managing your money" (ibid., p. 5). A central religious and philosophic question, "Who Am I", is answered by stating that "the answer is different for each individual, and everyone must find their (sic) own answer", "you can gain a sense of confidence and personal power from the constructive management of your feelings", "above all, have faith in yourself and in your ability to respond and change [for that] is the

greatest strength of all" (ibid., pp. 21, 30, 34). Faith, morals and religion are mentioned only once in the section on self-management, and that as part of a list of 64 influences on decision making, none of which are explained. Values are discussed but no possible religious connotations are mentioned.

Well-being is defined in terms of emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical and social health. Spiritual health is afforded two paragraphs. Says the textbook:

> Spiritual well-being is difficult to define. It means different things to different people. For some people, spiritual health may come by making time for personal reflection...Belief in religion and participation in its ceremonies and practices offer a sense of security, a sense of purpose and direction, clear values and morals, and a sense of not being alone in the world. (p. 53)

Two examples are offered, namely the Eastern belief of the balancing of the yin and the yang and the Native medicine wheel which balances spiritual, physical, emotional and mental elements. Rick Hansen and the Famous People Players are discussed as case studies for this section without any mention of their religious affiliations.

"Becoming religious or giving up religion" are offered as possible sources of stress along with 41 other events such as getting a speeding ticket and the death of a pet (p. 79). Coping with stress calls for relaxation techniques, deep breathing, meditation, and maintaining a positive attitude or imagery, while prayer is not mentioned (p. 81). Identifying sources of support in the community suggests groups such as the Canadian Arthritis Society, Alcoholics Anonymous, a school counsellor or a therapist (p. 86). No mention is made of a church community, synagogue, mosque or pastoral help.

The third major section on relationships lists the church as one of the network

of contacts one can draw on in forming friendships (p. 95). Love is defined to be more than a feeling although the reader is warned that:

> People who love each other feel interconnected in some complex, almost spiritual way. This isn't to say that two people who love each other "become one", but rather, that they feel closely linked together. (p. 97)

"Becoming one" in marriage seems to be an outdated concept for the authors and the Biblical source of the concept is not even mentioned as the quoted reference. When relationships end, the student is reminded to:

> Learn from the experience. Don't blame yourself or the other person. Both of you have changing needs and priorities. (p. 102)

That some of these needs might be stable religious norms is not addressed.

The topic of marriage is mentioned only in passing; divorce is never mentioned; single parenthood is not addressed nor are topics such as homosexuality or remaining single. It is curious that under the topic of "many different relationships", these topics are not addressed. One might assume that they are too controversial to be dealt with since they relate directly to religious beliefs and teachings, and hence are ignored. They are certainly not ignored in the reality of the lives of students.

In the event of death, students are directed towards friends and family, professionals and self-help groups for support. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross is quoted as the authority on death and dying (p. 103). Once again, no mention of the support of one's religious community, pastor, priest or rabbi is mentioned even though many who rarely "use" churches, do so on the occasion of their

funeral. The idea of the resurrection of the dead and life after death is not mentioned, much less considered possible.

The chapter on work and career planning completely ignores religious commitments as determinative in the way some people do their work and career planning. Religion is mentioned only once and then it is depicted as a barrier to occupational choices, something which human rights legislation is working steadfastly to eliminate (p. 143). The concepts of calling or vocation are not addressed. Work is defined only as paid work or a job. Differences between meaningful work and toil, rest and sloth, morality in the workplace, and stewardship of human and physical resources are not addressed. Says the text, "there is no right or wrong way of buying" (p. 169). Proponents of social responsibility teachings such as Christians, Muslims and Jews believe that there are right and wrong ways of buying. It is certainly a good topic for an exchange of beliefs rather than dismissing morality in the marketplace out of hand.

The independent living section is rampant with advice on taking care of one's own life and says nothing of communal rights or responsibilities. Worldview and lifestyle are not connected in any meaningful way. Budgeting of one's finances does not include charitable donations nor communal responsibilities such as church contributions but does include planning for the spending of some "mad money" which will enhance personal freedom (p. 185). Planning for the future requires careful planning and commitment so that the

"lifestyle you choose is likely to be the lifestyle you achieve" (p. 203). One can take the "straight and narrow" path or emulate those like Rick Hansen, Ralph Steinhauer, Darrel Elkow and Sharon Wood who took the "road not taken" and "achieved or 'actualized' their potential" (p. 203). Once again, morally problematic matters such as chronic unemployment and homelessness are not seen as significant enough to deal with or are simply ignored. Buying a home and filling the fridge and cupboards with food are depicted as having nothing to do with values, beliefs or religious commitments.

The glossary of the book is interesting in that it does *not* define terms such as religion, faith, belief, principle, marriage or community but *does* define entrepreneur, principal, biological rhythms, eustress, and travellers' cheque, etc. (pp. 218 - 222).

Although one would hope that many religious issues will inevitably be a part of the CALM classroom experience because teachers and students are directly involved, the textbook and supporting documents do little to encourage the discussion and understanding of religious beliefs in relation to career and life experiences. Alternative CALM textbooks used in Christian schools in Alberta such as the offending textbook mentioned in Chapter 1 present these topics from a Christian point of view and enable and encourage students to understand and examine the points of view of people of different religious persuasions (De Moor, 1980,1990).

Literature Review

The ideal of a liberal education as the preferred means of providing students with an all-around development is the stated operative ideal of Alberta schools and, in fact, North American public schooling. Christianity was the assumed religious basis of public schools in Canada during the pre-World War II years largely due to the formative direction of Egerton Ryerson. During the past forty years, a significant yet subtle change has taken place in Canadian schools as the multi-faith character of the student population has become recognized. As Thiessen (1993) states:

> Whereas in the middle ages and for some nineteenth-century thinkers all-round development included the development of a person morally, intellectually, and spiritually, the third component seems to have evaporated into thin air in modern times. (p. 46)

Thiessen observes that the fear of indoctrination through a religious upbringing, Christian or otherwise, has given a new face to liberal education, one that emphasizes the development of autonomy of thought and action and refrains as much as possible from discussing religious matters.

Donald Weeren (1986) agrees that the notion that schools should abstain from educating religiously is a recent phenomena prompted by the rise of universal, public, government-controlled schooling. Although he still sees a broadly supportive climate for educating religiously in the schools, he notes that:

> Caution seems to be the prevailing sentiment among educators anticipating objections by a minority to religious education initiatives which the majority would accept but not vigorously demand. (p. 4)

In the context of the teaching of a health curriculum, Weeren suggests that, in an

effort to avoid controversy, human sexuality is dealt with only in physiological terms and could therefore be understood by students as primarily a physical matter rather than involving values and beliefs. He concludes:

> It is ironic that religious education, and to a lesser extent, moral education, are sometimes deemed improper activities for a school because of their "indoctrinative" character, whereas the greater likelihood is that students are indoctrinated (i.e., unjustifiably restricted in their freedom to learn and develop) through the banning of religious and moral education. (p. 22)

Fear of dealing with any religious matter or perspective makes teachers afraid to use a wide range of materials and therefore pulls them back to using the "safer" single-textbook approach to teaching (Ghitterizing, 1985, p. 41). The same fear affects publishers of these textbooks, making them wary of giving offense or of antagonizing T+U reviewers, and thereby losing lucrative sales. For example, Cairney & Byfield (1987) claim that a Saskatchewan grade 9 Social Studies textbook, The Roots of Society, managed to present ancient and medieval history without one single mention of Christianity. Van Brummelen (1990) points to a British Columbia history textbook for grade 9, Exploration Canada, in which:

> Religion is conspicuous by its absence. Descriptions of missionary activities are labelled under the symbol for "native peoples." The two short paragraphs on Bishop Laval, contrary to most sections, lack a theme picture. Here, religion is presented as reactionary and causing disagreements. A whole chapter is devoted to women in New France, but the religious roots of Canada are disregarded. (pp. 10,11)

A number of studies in the United States have drawn similar conclusions about the lack of religious references in textbooks. Robert Bryan (1984), after studying twenty social studies textbooks used in the Montgomery County, Maryland, school

system concluded that:

> There is remarkable consensus to the effect that, after 1700, Christianity has no historical presence in America...These textbooks are written to propound the thesis that America was settled for the sake of religious freedom, and that religious freedom means the absence of religion...Once the [early Eastern seaboard] settlement has been effected, and the population has escaped from the trammels of religion, religion need not be mentioned again. There are exceptions to this general rule, but they are so sporadic as to be incapable of conveying anything like the true importance of religion in America. (pp. 3,10)

In a study done for the National Institute for Education (NIE) in 1985, Paul Vitz (1986) also reviewed textbooks commonly used in the United States. He reviewed 670 pieces in the most commonly used basal readers and concluded that:

> Serious Judeo-Christian religious motivation is featured nowhere. References to Christianity or Judaism are rare and generally superficial. Protestantism is almost entirely excluded, at least for whites. In contrast, primitive and pagan religions, as well as magic, get considerable emphasis. (p. 75)

> Such [popular magazine] articles celebrating the different religions and their contributions to this country are uncontroversial, well received, and appear to help sales. Yet, such a positive treatment of America's religious life is without any example in the ninety books evaluated in this entire study. (p. 79)

Donald Oppewal (1984) in his NIE Equity in Values Education Report, reports similar findings about the neglect of religious references in biology, social studies and health education textbooks commonly used in the United States. He writes:

> (T)he examination of...health/sex textbooks reveals the consistent taking of sides on controversial matters. Both religious beliefs and traditional morality, when recognized as relevant to the subject, are pejoratively pitted against three substitutes for the transcendent norms claimed in traditional morality. These three substitutes are statistics (frequency criterion) as determining the norm for human behaviour; the authority of narrowly selected experts; and the consistent assumptions that newer and more recent opinion is superior to earlier and traditional beliefs.

> Taken collectively, these three criteria reveal that traditional and religious values receive a seriously unfair and unbalanced treatment in these textbooks on health and sex education. (p. 111)

On the basis of this literature review, it is fair to conclude that the deliberate exclusion of matters concerning religion in commonly used textbooks is well documented.

Conclusion

This research is limited to two samples of curriculum materials used in Alberta schools and is unable to review the documentation related to their Tolerance and Understanding analysis. If these curriculum materials are representative of most curriculum materials used in Alberta schools, it can be concluded that the stated goals of Alberta Education and the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding concerning the need for 'shared experiences' in a public school setting in which matters of religion are fairly presented in a non-judgmental manner are *not* being met. The omission of matters concerning religion in textbooks and teacher resource materials is not limited to Alberta but is part of a North America-wide pattern of avoiding any serious references to matters of faith, beliefs and religious practices. Because Alberta Education has specifically noted the intolerance inherent in such omissions, and since it has mandated a specific review process for highlighting such omissions, one would hope that attempts at building tolerance and understanding in matters of religion would be more successful than they appear to be.

Students cannot grow in their tolerance, in any serious sense, about that which

they have no knowledge and understanding. Leaving them naked in the face of quasi-religious propagandists, ignorant of the roots of their culture, unaware of the challenge that religion makes about human life, leaves students in an excellent position to become thoroughly intolerant of religious individuals and groups.

CHAPTER 3

RELIGION AND SCHOOLING IN CANADA

Introduction

Canada's schools were initially almost all Christian schools, i.e., Catholic and Protestant schools. The Protestant school system has gradually been transformed into what is commonly called the Public School system, a system in which matters concerning tolerance in religious education have become contentious and confusing. Through an examination of government reports on education in various Canadian provinces, Chapter 3 explores how religious education in Canada's public schools has increasingly been trivialized or eliminated. The study will examine the report of the Committee on Religious Education in the Public Schools of the Province of Ontario (the Mackay Report) written in 1969, the Alberta Education and Diploma Requirements Report (the Harder Report) written in 1977, and other relevant reports.

The Mackay Report

The Mackay Report was presented to the Minister of Education in Ontario by the Committee on Religious Education in The Public Schools of the Province of Ontario in 1969. The Committee based its report on the belief that:

> (I)n a democratic society every adult, and every young person, has the right to choose freely the spiritual and moral values he wishes, or, indeed, to reject them. A central object of education is to further the search for truth, and to enable the learner to make informed judgments. Thus we hope it will be through true education, and not through any kind of indoctrination, that he will be encouraged to choose the

> religious and moral values that will hold as good for his time as those which we ourselves prize so highly have held good in ours. For indeed we have seen that our society has been altering greatly in recent decades, and is continuing to change rapidly. Those who made decisions before us concerning religious and moral education in the public schools did so in the context of their times. Our recommendations are necessarily made in the context of our own time....[we need] now to look beyond the rules of both old and new moralities for objectives which we think need never change. (Mackay, 1969, p. xv)

The Mackay report was, therefore, in accord with the Hall-Dennis Report, Living And Learning, introduced in Ontario in 1968, a year prior to the Mackay report. Under the title, "The truth shall make you free", the Hall-Dennis Report stated that:

> The underlying aim of education is to further man's unending search for truth. Once he possesses the means to truth, all else is within his grasp. Wisdom and understanding, sensitivity, compassion, and responsibility, as well as intellectual honesty and personal integrity, will be his guides in adolescence and his companions in maturity. This is the message that must find its way into the minds and hearts of all Ontario children. This is the key to open all doors. It is the instrument which will break the shackles of ignorance, of doubt, and of frustration; that will take all who respond to its call out of their poverty, their slums, and their despair; that will spur the talented to find heights of achievement and provide every child with the experience of success; that will give mobility to the crippled; that will illuminate the dark world of the blind and bring the deaf into communion with the hearing; that will carry solace to the disordered mind, imagery to the slow of wit, and peace to the emotionally disturbed; that will make all men brothers, equal in dignity if not in ability; and that will not tolerate disparity of race, colour, or creed. (Hall-Dennis, 1968, p. 9)

Further reading of the documents reveals that the push for autonomy of thought and the search for truth in a non-sectarian, secular (i.e. non-religious) setting took on religious visions of its own. "True education" involved searching and choosing while religious 'indoctrination' apparently did not. "Truth" would set us free, religious education, apparently, would enslave.

The Mackay Report recommended a program of moral development as a replacement for the program of Christian religious programs adopted in 1944 which, in the opinion of the report "is a vehicle leading to religious commitment rather than true education" (Mackay, 1969, p. 21). It recommended that:

> (T)he present course of study in religious education in the elementary schools of Ontario be discontinued, and that its aims...be abandoned.
>
> [Further that] opening exercises consisting of National Anthem and a prayer, either of universal character appealing to God for help in the day's activities, or the Lord's Prayer, be held in the home rooms each morning.
>
> [Further that] the high duty of public education to foster character building be discharged through a clearly understood, continuously pursued, universal program pervading every curricular and extra-curricular activity in the public school system...[which] will have as its focus character building, ethics, social attitudes and moral values and principles. (Mackay, 1969, p. 93)

The Mackay Report represented a major shift in educational policy in Ontario and was seen as a restatement of the policies of Egerton Ryerson. However, Ryerson's model for school development was founded on the premise that the Christian religion was all-pervasive in the public schools. His objections were to denominational-specific teachings or to the teaching of dogma or catechetical instruction. His position regarding teaching in the public school system can be illustrated as follows:

Acceptable	**Unacceptable**
Biblical history	Sectarian(denominational)
Biblical morality	differences
Ten Commandments	Catechism
Lord's Prayer	Doctrine
Christian values as	Particular denominational
the foundation of society	emphases

(Fernhout, 1979, p. 21)

The Mackay report accepted Ryerson's split framework in defining religious education, but rearticulated it with new distinctions between what was acceptable and unacceptable in its aims:

Acceptable	**Unacceptable**
True education	Indoctrination
Search for truth	Commitment
Informed judgments	Inculcation & proselytization
Individual choice	Personal commitment
Religion as subject of study	Religion as a manifestation of faith
Knowledge about religion, objective examination of evidence, inquiring mind	Place of worship

(ibid., p. 24)

Now, not the Christian religion, nor even any religion was to be taught as being all pervasive as principles of societal life nor as the foundation of basic morality. A program of moral education was to pervade the new curriculum, a program to be considered apart from any and all religion. Hence, the committee's report was aptly titled "Religious Information and Moral Development" to reflect that religion was now relegated to the private sphere or as an object of study about facts of religion. Schools should now build character in such a way that "a high degree of moral development and an awareness of those ethical ideals which are generally commended by society [are taught]" (Mackay, 1969, p. 41). The words of Lawrence Kohlberg and Jean Piaget would now hold sway, namely that "It is not the decision reached in a given situation that matters, so much as the process of arriving at that decision" (ibid., p. 44). Moral reasoning was to replace final moral conclusions. Discussing anecdotal

material, often far removed from present moral issues would "inculcate the habit of moral reasoning" (ibid., p. 60) and would avoid moralizing.

Having discarded the teaching *of* religion in one sense, the Mackay report did advocate study *about* religion as an alternative. Religion has cultural implications. Therefore, the report stated that at all grade levels:

> Appropriate information should be provided, when practicable, in the regular textbooks and other teaching materials which are employed within the classroom. In the study of art, literature, social studies, history, geography, and other subjects, a positive effort should be made to demonstrate, by the use of such texts and the comments of the teachers, the way in which political, social, and artistic developments have occurred through the influence of religious institutions. (ibid., p. 72)

This was to occur throughout the curriculum, in addition to the development of comparative religion courses at the high school level:

> (F)or the sole purpose of enriching the culture of the pupil and not for persuading him that the Old and New Testaments provide a basis for a religious doctrine to be adopted by him. (ibid., p. 73)

In subsequent years, the Ministry of Education in Ontario did provide for the teaching of optional world religions courses in high schools. The addition of religious elements to textbooks never materialized since, presumably, publishers understood the potential for controversy and therefore did more to eliminate religious references rather than increasing them.

Day to day activity in the classrooms of Ontario public schools was not necessarily in line with public policy. Many schools continued Christian teachings, religious exercises, Christmas concerts, and other religious practices since their constituents generally approved and "no one called to complain". When someone did

complain to the courts, the ruling by the Ontario Court of Appeal in the Elgin County case in 1990 to ban all religious (i.e. Christian) practices from public schools, put an end to any remaining Christian influence or teaching in the Ontario public schools, at least, in law (Corporation, 1990).

The Harder Report

In 1977, Alberta Education released a discussion paper regarding Alberta high school diploma requirements. The paper was known as the Harder Report and was noteworthy since it made many specific proposals for change without providing substantial reasons for such changes. When reasons were provided they were either questionable or ambiguous. Harder defines the purpose of education by quoting Isocrates' view of the ideal man as one who is expedient, honourable, tolerant, self-controlled, brave and not spoiled by success (Harder, 1977, p. 2). The section on objectives informs the reader that schools should "develop knowledge, skill, attitudes and habits which contribute to ... spiritual health and safety" (ibid., p. 8). Carney (1978) comments:

> There are to be norms of spiritual health, but the paramount source of these standards is ambiguous; in the Report's purpose reference they are socially set; in the goal statement individually determined. (p. 111)

One recommendation was the addition of mandatory Religious Studies course(s) for all public junior high and high schools. A rationale was not presented, but it was cautioned that these courses are controversial and must be handled with care (Harder, 1977, p. 37). Explaining why such a caveat was made, Carney (1978) says:

> Until the early 1960s, religious education in public schools [in Alberta] ranged from a confessional orientation at one end and a comparative-historical approach at the other with occasional thought being given to developing a middle-ground syllabus 'which might satisfy a majority of Protestant denominations' [Worth 1959, p.128]...Most common public schools found the middle ground syllabus as problematic as confessional instruction and consequently avoided both, opting instead to provide allusions to religious phenomena by comparative religion components in the Social Studies, and by recruiting staff whose beliefs were generally consistent with those of significant client groups. (p. 115)

The Harder recommendations concerning mandatory Religious Studies courses were not implemented although Alberta Education did provide two brief and unspecific optional course descriptions for Religious Studies. By not being willing or able to see beyond the information/indoctrination dilemma, Alberta public schools again chose, so far as possible, to avoid religious studies.

Other Reports

The reports discussed above must be seen in the context of a continuous flow of provincial government reports, each in some way defining the purpose of public schooling and defining the role of religion in public and private schools. Examples of such reports are discussed briefly to illustrate the diversity of opinions and perspectives.

The Hall-Dennis Report, Living and Learning, quoted above, was written a year prior to the Mackay Report and proved to be a central turning point in the development of Ontario schools during the 1970's. The report acknowledged that the private schooling issue was "far from simple...and exceedingly complex" (Hall-Dennis, 1968). The issue was skirted by recommending a Legislative study to deal with

private schooling, a study which never took place. The report does set the stage for the Mackay report when it states as part of the aims of education:

> A great many people, of course, have firm beliefs in what they regard as unquestionably true, and many of them think it right or necessary for the young to acquire these beliefs. In spite of this, most educators agree that there can be no deliberate indoctrination if intellectual integrity is to be maintained and valued by pupils. (p. 69)

Although the issue of private schools was neglected in the Province of Saskatchewan for many years, the report of the Minister's Advisory Board on Independent Schools (Postnikoff, 1990) is unique in its strong position in support of parental rights in education. It states:

> The Department will ... recognize freedom of conscience and religion in education, the rights of children, the rights of parents, the compelling interest of the state in education, and fundamental justice for all.
>
> Ontario's public schools cannot teach academics from an overtly religious point of view .. [they] may teach about religion as, say, a sociological phenomenon that impacts our culture, they cannot teach religion per se. From a doctrinal point of view, their approach must be strictly neutral. Parents of children in religiously-based independent schools... have no choice for their children except in independent schools. (pp. 11,44)

In Alberta, the report of the Commission on Educational Planning (Worth, 1972), had much to say about valuing and beliefs although not with great clarity. It agreed with the basic premise of the Mackay Report by saying:

> The worst casualty of stultifying programs will be the student who adapts best, who learns a studied morality as opposed to developing one for himself. (p. 176)

It suggests that man's development must go beyond himself as an animal while still remembering his place in the ecological plan of life. Beliefs are important to man,

and therefore courses about religion in Alberta schools are seen to be positive. "Impermanence is permanently in the centre of Alberta life" says Worth, and so practical Albertans must more and more come to see the value of implementing the principles of adaptability and diversity. Traditionally, says Worth, Albertans have tended to deal with absolutes and have even tried to teach children the best way to behave, feel and think. Thus, we will have to make some adjustments as we now move slowly towards the teaching of the valuing process in the schools. This will take some time, says the report (p. 176).

Educating Religiously In The Public Schools

In Educating Religiously In The Multi-faith School, Donald Weeren (1986) shows how religious education can be attempted in a public or multi-faith school setting. He is well aware of the pitfalls of entering the domain of religion including those of indoctrination, of giving offense, of angering parents and of demanding that teachers take risks they no longer wish to take in the public school classroom.

In his opening two chapters, he lays out a careful definition of terms which distinguishes between education and nurture, religion and secularity, educating religiously and educating secularly, educating religiously and educating morally and between informing and influencing. He concludes that:

> It is ironic that religious education, and to a lesser extent, moral education, are sometimes deemed improper activities for a school because of their "indoctrinative" character, whereas the greater likelihood is that students are indoctrinated (i.e., unjustifiably restricted in their freedom to learn and develop) through the banning of religious and moral education. (p. 22)

Weeren then describes various existing programs of religious instruction which, in his view, indicate that there is hope for and good reason to provide religious education in the public school setting. The "Biblical Literature in the High School" course discussed in his Chapter 3 makes good sense as an example of how Christianity and other religions can and must be taught simply to acknowledge that much of literature, history and philosophy depends on an understanding of Biblical and other religious histories.

The Toronto Model for Daily Readings and Prayers, described in Weeren's Chapter 4, could be argued as an exercise in futility to the point of being ludicrous. To one day pray, "Thy will be done" and the next day read from a secular denunciation of all forms of God is a lame attempt at religious education. To read "Thy Kingdom come" for a minute and then get on with the real business of everyday life without any further mention of that Kingdom of God is surely sacrilegious, not religious.

Other programs of religious instruction are described, each with some measure of success in presenting to students the reality that people take seriously the implications of religion for life.

Conclusion

Weeren's book was written before the outcome of the Elgin County School court case in Ontario (Corporation, 1990) which calls into question the continuation of any of the religious education programs as part of the public school curriculum.

More and more, textbooks and provincial curriculum guidelines, in spite of official rhetoric, avoid the topic of religion altogether for fear of offending anyone and everyone. Government study reports provide no great clarity on the standing of matters of religion in the classroom other than that public schools can no longer teach a religion (Christianity), that there still is value in teaching about religions, and that public schools can and must stay clear of any form of indoctrination through focusing on the process of moral development rather than on the content of morality. Religious schools are to be suspected (and perhaps punished financially) since they still maintain an antiquated view of education and are apt to lead the child in a narrowly determined direction rather than teaching for autonomy of thought.

These developments confirm that public school education in Canada is no longer Christian in purpose and direction as it once was. Canadians of religious persuasion and even agnostics *would* undoubtedly want to argue that religious education of some kind *should* play a role in a child's education. However, in the face of the developments cited above, it is becoming increasingly difficult and confusing to display any arguable merits of religious education in public schools. It is also increasingly necessary for religious schools to defend against the charge that they promote intolerance through indoctrination. How tolerance and understanding in religious education is to be *promoted* in Canada's schools is unclear.

CHAPTER 4
THREE DIFFERING WORLDVIEWS

Introduction

In order to discern why promoting tolerance and understanding in religious education is difficult, it is illuminating to expose the three differing worldviews which underlie the Roman Catholic schools, public schools and some independent Christian schools in Canada. These three worldviews are Thomism (Roman Catholic), liberalism (public) and Calvinism (some independent Christian). These worldviews differ in their views of God, the nature of evil, the source of salvation, the role of individuals in relation to society and inevitably, the place of religion in the task of schools. They generate three overlapping yet distinct philosophical views of tolerance in religious education.

All scholarship is inevitably bound up in what one believes - a starting point, a place to stand. Wolterstorff (1976) says that "in weighing a theory one always brings along the whole complex of one's beliefs" (pp. 62, 63). It is this 'whole complex of one's beliefs' that we here call one's worldview (German - *Weltanschauung*). It is a pre-theoretic view of reality which gives shape to one's theoretic view of reality, namely one's philosophy. One's philosophic paradigm will shape one's work in the academic disciplines such as the field of education (Wolters, 1985, pp. 1 - 11). Thomas Kuhn argues that each scientific community does its work by means of a shared paradigm.

> The paradigm functions as the scientists' conceptual framework - their shared generalizations, values and beliefs. It provides the criteria by which theories are judged, evidence is deemed admissible, the nature of demonstration is determined, and the elements of a true conclusion are constituted. (quoted in Walsh, 1984, p. 169)

Differences regarding paradigms between psychologists regarding mythical archetypes or behaviourist theory or between doctors practising holistic health practices such as acupuncture or those committed to surgery and medicine ultimately require nothing short of a conversion of faith in order to shift paradigms (ibid.). This does not exclude the possibility of interaction and the growth of mutual respect, but the paradigmatic differences must be recognized before understanding can take place. So it is in education.

Protestant and Catholic perspectives on religious education and tolerance are not just ad hoc and stubborn. They emerge with intensity because they represent belief systems defining a way of life as a whole and cannot be properly understood otherwise, and should be respected as such. Says Thiessen (1987), "We need to respect the integrity of a belief system" (p. 77). While the liberal perspective does not seem to emerge from a unitary worldview, it also has its fundamental tenets which need to be understood in order to grasp its particular insistence upon its point of view. Clarity in promoting tolerance in religious education will increase through understanding these three worldviews.

The Thomist Worldview

The epithet 'Thomist' is here applied to the followers of the teachings of St.

Thomas Aquinas (c.1224 - 1274), a Roman Catholic theologian and philosopher. A study of Thomist thought since the thirteenth century would reveal numerous emphases of thought and implication of Thomist writers, nevertheless, the revival of Thomism in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries and its prominence in recent Papal encyclicals point to a continued adherence by the Roman Catholic Church to the teachings of Aquinas (Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Vol.I, p. 121). Not all Roman Catholics today are Thomists, nor do all Roman Catholic schools necessarily adhere rigorously to Thomist thought. Yet, Thomism can be identified as the single most influential philosophy in the policy and practice of Roman Catholic schools in Canada. Understanding a Thomist worldview is crucial to understanding a Roman Catholic view of tolerance in religious education.

Thomas Aquinas was both a philosopher and theologian. By using both reason and faith, he answered questions concerning the nature of God, of the universe and of the relationship between God and people. For Aquinas, God created the world including human life and provided people with a physical body which is temporal and a spiritual, immaterial, and eternal soul which is the source of human self-awareness and freedom. Like Aristotle, Aquinas held that humans are distinguished from all other creatures by their reason. Human knowledge begins with sensation, is enhanced by conceptualization and is further enhanced by cooperation with the Divine and with the acceptance of Christian doctrine. Whereas 'the good life' is to be pursued in temporal life as a means of enhancing it towards a purposeful goal, Aquinas held that the ultimate good is only to be found in the experience of being in the presence of

God as much as possible here on earth and to be fulfilled only after death. Sin is what hampers attainment of the beatific vision of God and causes harm and alienation in the lives of people. The redemptive act of Jesus Christ instituted a new avenue to grace from the lost world of nature and as free agents, people can choose to cooperate or oppose the work of their salvation in this world.

Aquinas taught that the realm of nature is to be prized but the realm of grace, knowledge of God, is a donum superadditum, a gift added to nature. Sin causes the loss of this gift and the work of Jesus Christ restores it through the work of the church. Grace therefore, completes nature. Says Walsh (1984):

> Aquinas could embrace Aristotle as a true and reliable guide in the realm of nature and could affirm the church and the Word of God as a supernatural addition and complement of our creaturely lives. He was Aristotelian (in the natural realm) and Christian (in the realm of grace). (p. 113)

Matters concerning morality, faith, worship and spirituality were thus elevated to the realm of grace while the realm of nature subsumed all other matters of life in which reason is valued but separated from and ultimately subservient to faith. Said Aquinas in his Summa Theologiae to the question whether the natural law is the same in all men regardless of their faith:

> I answer that to the natural law belong those things to which a man is inclined naturally; and among these it is proper to man to be inclined to act according to reason...Accordingly then in speculative matters truth is the same in all men, both as to principles and as to conclusions; although the truth is not known to all as regards the conclusions, but only as regards the principles which are called common notions. (quoted in Skillen, 1991, p.394)

Human beings can therefore structure social life through common understanding and

the gift of reason irrespective of their religious persuasion but ultimately it will not bring them to the greatest good which is the realm of grace.

Thomism holds an aristocratic or feudal view of society, not a democratic one. Society must be governed by natural law which is determined through human reason and can therefore only tolerate democratic forms of government in the temporal order. The real Truth in life, however, is determined by Canon law, not by the temporal state, and is mediated and controlled in and through the Roman Catholic Church and its hierarchical structure of government headed by the Vicar of Christ on earth, the Pope. Through the means of God's grace, the sacraments, the church is able to exorcise to some extent the evil of the natural realm and is able to bring the state and other social institutions under its wing, baptizing them as much as possible into Christ.

The Thomist papal theocracy explains why Aquinas could on the one hand relegate much of life to the sphere of reason and natural law but at the same time demand that those who leave the Christian faith or who repudiate its doctrines can rightly be persecuted since such people deserve death and may be constrained, even physically, to repent and believe. Ideological conformity is required although the state plays a mediating role in protecting the rational actions of those who defy the teachings and authority of the Church. The need for interplay between the church and state was a necessary part of Aquinas' thinking and would eventually leave the door open for the state to subjugate the church. For Aquinas though, the church alone could pass judgment concerning the limits of the state and of natural law.

Thomism has withstood the test of misinterpretation, has been severely

criticized, but has nevertheless endured as a formative worldview and philosophical paradigm. Many of the post 14th century practices of the Roman Catholic Church do not speak well of the Thomist view of the supremacy of the Church nor did the acts of reason within the secular state throughout modern history testify affirmingly to the efficacy of natural law. The Protestant Reformation rejected the Thomist dualism and questioned the hierarchical form of church government so central to Thomist philosophy and theology. But modern day Roman Catholic clergy, as well as educational philosophers, still depend heavily on the teachings of Aquinas. Pope Leo XIII in his Aeterni Patris (1879) ordered that the doctrines of Thomas Aquinas, 'the pre-eminent guardian and glory of the Catholic Church', were to be taught in all its schools and academies. If other writers disagreed with the teachings of Aquinas, the 'former must be sacrificed to the latter' (as quoted in Skillen, 1991, p. 394). Pope Pius XI in his Quadragesima Anno states concerning the authority of the Church in social matters:

> (T)here resides in Us [the Church] the right and duty to pronounce with supreme authority upon social and economic matters. Certainly the Church was not given the commission to guide men to an only fleeting and perishable happiness but to that which is eternal. Indeed, 'the Church holds that it is unlawful for her to mix without cause in these temporal concerns,' however, she can in no wise renounce the duty God entrusted to her to interpose her authority, not of course in matters of technique for which she is neither suitably equipped nor endowed for office, but in all things that are connected with the moral law. (as quoted in ibid., p. 384)

It is clear that the Thomist teaching that the church ultimately is empowered to determine where the boundary between matters of grace and matters of nature is remains intact. Kings must still be subject to priests in matters of grace. Although

Vatican II softened such harsh distinctions, this Thomist teaching remains a central component of the Roman Catholic Church.

Modern Catholic scholars such as the Bishops of the Second Vatican Council, the American Catholic Bishops, Jacques Maritain (1951) and Alasdair MacIntyre (1988) rely on the teachings of Aquinas in their writings and defend the Thomist synthesis of faith and reason. Thomism is an historically and philosophically well established and articulated worldview which still has great influence in the Roman Catholic Church and in its schools.

The Calvinist Worldview

Much like the work of one man, Thomas Aquinas, sparked a diverse and pervasive worldview and philosophical paradigm, so the work of John Calvin sparked a worldview and philosophical paradigm called Calvinism, one the of many forms of Christianity rising out of the Protestant Reformation. Our discussion will briefly examine the Calvinist worldview, but will focus on the philosophical system which Neo-Calvinists in the Netherlands, and later in Canada, articulated and which served as the philosophical foundation for the Christian Schools International parental Christian school system in Canada. This admittedly brief description will focus on elements which lead Calvinist Christian schools to view tolerance and religious education from a distinctive point of view.

No description of Calvinism would be complete without mention of the five points of Calvinism, ones refined and stated by the Canons of Dort, fifty years after

the death of Calvin. These are: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace and the perseverance of the saints. Calvinism's primary emphasis was on God's grace (*sola gratia*). Because of the fall into sin, human will is not free and relies on God's grace to restore such freedom. "God is at work in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Phil.2:13). "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God" (Eph. 2:8). Hence, Calvinists baptize infants to acknowledge the primacy of God's covenantal act prior to the exercise of the child's free will and anticipate an affirmation or profession of faith as a response once children mature.

The Protestant Reformation, and Calvin in particular, also emphasized the exclusive authority of scripture (*sola scriptura*) in response to the Thomist teachings and practices concerning the role of the Roman Catholic church as being the arbiter of God's Word. The certainty and meaning of God's Word is, rather, found in the testimony of the Holy Spirit in the hearts of people. Said Calvin:

> If we desire to provide in the best way for our consciences - that they may not be perpetually beset by the instability of doubt or vacillation, and that they may not also boggle at the smallest quibbles - we ought to seek our conviction in a higher place than human reasons, judgments, or conjectures, that is, in the secret testimony of the Spirit. (Calvin, 1559, I.7.4)

The constant interaction between Word and Spirit requires a continuous reforming of that which is deformed by sin since, according to Wolterstorff:

> The Bible does not provide us with a body of indubitably known propositions by reference to which we can govern all our acceptance and nonacceptance of theories. Rather, the route from the certainties of the biblical vision of life to the details of specific scientific analysis is mediated by a philosophical paradigm. (as quoted in Walsh, 1984, p.

172)

Scriptural interpretation and application is not only an individual act, but also one that is historically formulated in the community of God's people - all through the work of the Spirit, not the church or reason.

Christians, according to Calvin, are therefore called to serve God in this world in response to the free gift of grace and led by the inner witness of the Word by the Spirit. This service transcends individual piety and personal salvation and even the institutional church. It calls for the realization of God's will in every sphere of life including the state, economics, culture, science and schooling.

A Calvinist worldview acknowledges the sovereignty of God over all of creation and believes that individuals can enter into direct, personal and immediate relationship with God through the redemptive work of Jesus and through the continuous indwelling of the Holy Spirit. God is the source and the ruler of all things in this world but the dignity which he bestowed on people by creating them in His image (*imageo dei)* demands and accepts the majesty of individual conscience and the right to private judgment. When Adam and Eve fell into sin, they took the whole of humanity and its relationships with them causing a separation from God and thus created social disharmony. Through the work of Christ, people's relationship to God and social harmony can again be restored on earth as the Kingdom of God on earth is partially restored, to be consummated upon Christ's return. People as individuals and in communities are called to have dominion over the earth and to remove the effects of sin in social relationships as much as that is possible in and through the law of love

to God and neighbour.

Calvinists maintain that God's common grace saves all people from the worst effects of their sinfulness and provides the basis for restoration in human culture and in scientific study. A democratic ordering is favoured by Calvinists as a means of ensuring self-government in both church and state and provides the best opportunity for a constitutional rule of law (Taylor, 1966, pp. 46,47 and Hesselink, 1983).

The Calvinist worldview was translated into a philosophical paradigm and into social action in the Netherlands by Groen Van Prinsterer, Abraham Kuyper, Herman Dooyeweerd and many others. They taught, in opposition to the Thomist teaching, that the state is sovereign within its own sphere as a public authority but does not transcend any other sphere such as the church or the family which are equally sovereign in their own respective spheres of authority and task. Further, cultural life does not need direct supervision from the clergy as Thomism taught, rather says Kuyper (1961), God's common grace:

> (R)elaxes the curse which rests upon it [culture], arrests its process of corruption, and thus allows untrammelled development of our life in which to glorify Himself as Creator. Thus the Church receded in order to be neither more nor less than the congregation of believers, and in every department the life of the world was not emancipated from God, but from the dominion of the Church. Thus domestic life regained its independence, trade and commerce realized their strength in liberty, art and science were set free from every ecclesiastical bond and restored to their own inspiration, and man began to understand the subjection of all nature with its hidden forces and treasures to himself as a holy duty, imposed upon him by the original ordinances of Paradise: 'Have dominion over them.' Henceforth the curse should no longer rest upon the world itself, but upon that which is sinful in it, and instead of monastic flight from the world the duty is now emphasized of serving God in the world, in every position of life. (p. 30)

Even the church is subject to error and reformation as is the rest of societal life including the state in its role of serving public justice, all subject to continuous reformation according to the ordinances of God. No meaning exists outside of the relationship between God and creation.

A social and political philosophy arising from this worldview was articulated by Herman Dooyeweerd. Skillen (1991) explains how, in addition to the immediate horizon of everyday experience, Dooyeweerd points to a second horizon, namely the 'modal' structure of reality. Stated briefly, this structure contends that, although all social spheres operate in all modes of reality, each sphere is defined through a distinct qualifying aspect. A state is led by the juridical mode, a business by economic stewardship, and so on, indicating both a leading identity structure and limitations on the varying spheres of authority in society. Neither history, reason, economics, theoretic thought, nor the institutional church can be absolutized as a means of defining the universal order of being. "Sphere sovereignty refers to both the complex modal character and the diversified social character of creational meaning whereby God upholds the boundaries and identifies creaturely life" (ibid.,p. 404).

Neo-Calvinists emphasize that the church, the school, the family and the state are equal and unique types of human communities and associations which operate in partnership but not in subjection to each other. Further, each has its own identity structure and purpose which are creationally structured and need to be clearly maintained in the everyday experience of life and in social policy in a pluralistic society. Individuals of many differing faiths and persuasions gather in religiously

diverse associations to give expression to their beliefs in public life activities, such as schooling, which the state in its role of maintaining public justice should foster and promote.

God's creation structure determines that all people believe or have faith and that neutrality is impossible, say Neo-Calvinists. Such faith can be in God, other transcendent gods (which, for Christians, are false gods) or in some aspect of creation such as economics or reason (which make absolute something which is relative and self-insufficient). It is God's desire and call that such faith be in obedience to him, but the image of God in all people demands that such choices be freely made and expressed in individual lives and in public life such as schooling.

North American Neo-Calvinist educational philosophers and practitioners have further articulated the Neo-Calvinist worldview and philosophical paradigm for the development of parental Christian schools in Canada. These schools develop and teach curriculum which seeks to allow Word and Spirit to speak to all of life through constant reformation of both everyday life and theoretical inquiry by individuals and associations.

The Liberal Worldview

Describing a Christian worldview is difficult since one must recognize that within Christianity differing worldviews and philosophical paradigms exist, such as was described in Thomism and Calvinism. Describing a liberal worldview presents similar problems since not all liberals agree on what liberalism is nor how it is to be

expressed in philosophical paradigms or in life's practice. We must therefore limit our expectations of capturing the whole of liberal thought and must look towards those tenets of a liberal worldview that aid in our understanding of the meaning and practice of tolerance in religious education.

The liberal worldview can best be understood as a belief that the individual is to be free from coercion by church or state, a belief that the state must be neutral between various conceptions of the common good, and a belief in autonomy of the individual. Liberals thus reject Calvinism since it denies all three of these tenets. Liberals also reject Thomism's grace/nature synthesis because liberalism leaves little or no room for grace, faith or religion but emphasizes reason and autonomy.

Liberalism derives its name from the concept of freedom (liberty). Although all liberals argue for freedom, it is not agreed what that freedom is nor how that freedom is to be interpreted. According to the Encyclopedia of Philosophy (1967):

> One might broadly divide philosophers of freedom into those who think that to be free is to be able to do what one wants to do and those who think that to be free is to do what one ought to do. By a similar method, one might divide liberals into those who see freedom as something which belongs to the individual, to be defended against the encroachments of the state, and those who see freedom as something which belongs to society and which the state, as the central instrument of social betterment, can be made to enlarge and improve. (V.II, pp. 460,461)

A liberal worldview can be illustrated by summarizing the similarities and differences between the generally acknowledged founders of liberalism, John Locke and John Stuart Mill, and by illustrating recent debates between contemporary liberals.

John Locke's major philosophical work, An Essay Concerning Human

Understanding (1690), questioned both a Platonic and a Thomist worldview by suggesting that the minds of children at birth were clean slates (tabula rasa) on which the data of life experience were written through sense perceptions. He rejected the Platonic view of innate ideas of fundamental concepts being present in the minds of children prior to sense experience. He also rejected what he considered to be the dogmatic and authoritarian Christian teaching of his time and emphasized the use of the scientific method, reason, prudence and tolerance as practical solutions to the burning issues of his time and place.

In his Second Treatise on Civil Government (1690), Locke emphasized the priority of individual, natural human rights of liberty and property and saw the social contract of individuals as the basis for protecting those rights by means of the state. Individuals were free, equal and independent and were not to be deprived by the acts of others but only through mutual consent of the governed to submit to majority rule, while respecting the rights of the minority at all times. Locke rejected the hierarchical concept of government through kings or clergy and suggested that all people were to participate actively in the legislative, judicial and executive levels of government through which justice would be determined. All individuals participated in the social contract and must be provided with a general civic education to ensure the proper and best functioning of the state and the promotion of civic virtues.

The liberal worldview as described by Locke saw evil not so much in the depravity of individuals but in the ordering of society into corrupt social and political institutions. Human nature was basically good and must be set free to express itself

through reasoned self-interest and benevolence. Any restrictions such as indoctrination and coercion, which do not allow the free choice of individuals, must be removed as much as possible by the state for the good of each individual and for the growth and reformation of society. Human reason must be autonomous and free from superstition and ignorance in order to provide what John Stuart Mill, almost two centuries later, called "the marketplace of ideas" in which freedom of speech, the press and assembly would ensure that reasonable people would judge rightly as disinterested decision-makers who apply objective rationality to decide between competing visions of the good.

Freedom for liberals also required that religion be strictly an individual matter and must not impose itself on any matters of state. For Locke, this meant the separation of church and state. For other liberals, this meant the disestablishing of any religious authority in the public realm. Liberal schools should therefore aim to avoid or neglect the teaching of religion in the classroom and free the pursuit of knowledge from any religious constraints. At best, schools must equip students with a moral education which will allow students to decide for themselves what is or is not morally acceptable and to enable individuals to make choices concerning their own religion, politics and lifestyle.

John Stuart Mill's essay On Liberty (1859) reiterated the need for individual freedom but further argued that such freedom is not possible unless extensive human diversity is fostered through emphasis on human autonomy. Says Mendus (1989) of Mill's emphasis on diversity:

> ...diversity is morally required because human nature is itself diverse ('human beings are not like sheep and even sheep are not indistinguishably alike'); and...diversity is required as a necessary precondition of the promotion and maintenance of autonomy ('It is the privilege and proper condition of a human being arrived at the maturity of his faculties, to use and interpret experience in his own way'). (p. 58)

Mendus pictures Mill's worldview of the human race as a caravan progressing along the road of moral improvement through the exercise of autonomy. This moral improvement is not only for the individual but also for social improvement, i.e., the growth of civilization (p. 59). How the conflict between individual improvement (excellence) and social improvement (equity) is to be resolved is currently debated by contemporary liberals.

Liberalism continues to be burdened with the task of positing a generally acceptable, pretheoretical worldview which requires broad acceptance prior to detailing a philosophical paradigm which will give shape to everyday life. Locke's picture of the social contract and the tabula rasa, and Mill's picture of the free marketplace of ideas have not sufficed. Contemporary liberal philosophers continue the search with pictures such as the veil of ignorance suggested by John Rawls (1971) in which rational individuals return to an original position in order to determine what is just prior to knowing one's position in life. Similarly, Ronald Dworkin (1985) posits a picture of a state which is completely neutral in everyday politics between competing conceptions of the good such as Christians, Jews, agnostics, hockey fans and football fans. This too is a pretheoretical picture of what ought to be but is not yet and perhaps, never will be. As Mendus (1989) comments:

> It is important to note that these [liberal] claims are not, and do not

> purport to be, explanations of the foundations of liberalism; rather, they are pictures, or models, of how the liberal society conducts itself - of what it aims at in its application, not what it is based on in its theory; of what it believes to be a proper political order, not why it takes that order to be proper. (p. 118)

Liberalism has a relatively coherent pretheoretical commitment to freedom from religious intervention, to autonomy and to neutrality. These tenets of the liberal worldview are the basis on which the modern day public school systems in Canada are built.

Having thus described three very diverse worldviews which have lengthy historical roots and which are also at work in a variety of Canadian schools, we now turn to the educational implications of these worldviews for the ways in which tolerance in religious education is conceptualized and applied.

CHAPTER 5
THE EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS OF THOMISM, CALVINISM AND LIBERALISM

In order to more fully understand the differing views of tolerance in religious education of the worldviews described in Chapter 4, we now turn to their educational implications as generally understood and as described by modern educational philosophers of each tradition.

Educational Implications of Thomism

The synthesis between grace and nature, faith and reason provided by Thomism requires that schools share in the overall goal of education in all of life, namely: (1) to provide the knowledge, exercise, and activities that cultivate human spirituality and (2) to provide the knowledge, exercise and activities that cultivate human reason. Thomist schools operate on the principle of the 'hierarchy of generalities' (Gutek, 1988, p. 60), in which those aspects of life which are the most general, abstract and durable are on the top of the hierarchy and those which are the most particular, specific and transitory are on the lower level. Because 'grace completes nature', conflicts or inconsistencies within such a hierarchy are to be resolved in favour of grace/faith while allowing for great autonomy of thought and reason in the lower realms as the proper, temporal, and less enduring realm of nature.

The curriculum is structured for two purposes: (1) to provide spiritual knowledge through courses such as religious education courses and theological studies

which lead students towards the greatest happiness of the beatific vision of God and (2) to provide rational knowledge through basic scientific and cultural studies which enable them to live free and reasoned lives in their temporal and natural environment.

Thomist education also distinguishes between the role of education in all of life and that which is provided in schools. Whereas education in all of life encompasses all the aspects of a person's life in relationships in the family, the church and other communities, schooling concerns itself primarily with deliberate instruction of disciplines.

Although the success and character of deliberate instruction depends a great deal on the overall education of children, it maintains its own specific and limited function within the schooling experience. Thomist teachers are to be skilled in the disciplines and are to teach a doctrine of love and understanding through the cultivation of reason and the transmission of knowledge. Moral education requires a sound program of religious education courses, a subsidiarity to religious doctrine in matters concerning morality in all studies, and a contemplative and exemplary lifestyle which warrants imitation and modelling by students (ibid., pp. 56 - 65). Although rational thought does not guarantee moral uprightness, it does assist in enabling students to make free choices and to evaluate various points of view. The school's religious and intellectual milieu play an important role in forming dispositions and knowledge that will lead to spiritual fulfilment.

Jacques Maritain was a leading spokesperson for Neo-Thomist, Roman Catholic

education. In his book, Education at the Crossroads (1943), he provides a philosophy of education reflecting the Thomist worldview. Says Maritain:

> The prime goal of education is the conquest of internal and spiritual freedom to be achieved by the individual person, or in other words, his liberation through knowledge and wisdom, good will, and love.
>
> Man [is] an animal endowed with reason, whose supreme dignity is in the intellect; and man as a free individual in personal relation with God, whose supreme righteousness consists in voluntarily obeying the law of God; and man as a sinful and wounded creature called to divine life and to the freedom of grace, whose supreme perfection consists of love.
>
> The upbringing of the human being must lead both intelligence and will toward achievement, and the shaping of the will is throughout more important to man than the shaping of the intellect. (Maritain, 1943, pp. 11,7,22)

Maritain notes that a human being is a horizon in which two worlds meet, namely a person or a whole made independent by his spiritual soul as well as a person who is part of the material world, living by sense and reason as well as by instinct (p. 9). Thus, a person seeks inner, spiritual freedom but also a freedom within the realm of material nature and social life. Such a freedom subordinates the individual to the common good, one which accepts obedience, self-sacrifice, and a common law for the general welfare and which requires the awakening of civic understanding and civic virtues in students (pp. 14,15).

The knowledge which is of most worth to Maritain is that which "makes the mind penetrate into those things which are the richest in truth and intelligibility ... for it is by grasping the object and having itself seized and vitalized by truth that the human mind gains both its strength and its freedom" (pp. 51,52). The primary task of teachers is to determine "the mode in which the instruments of thought and the liberal

arts are to be taught" (p. 62). Maritain warns that although youth have a right to education in the liberal arts in order to prepare for human work and human leisure, such education is killed by premature specialization. A good philosophy must be a true philosophy, says Maritain. He recognizes the value of reading all philosophy but admits his own hope that Aristotelian and Thomist philosophy will gain momentum since, for him, it is the true philosophy. Liberal education cannot complete its task without a true theology either and courses in religious education should be offered to all students, excepting those who choose not to attend who are "allowed to remain incomplete in wisdom at their own pleasure" (p. 75). Theology is rooted in faith, philosophy in reason (secure in its sought-for autonomy) and both are to play an important role in the shaping of curriculum for all students. Maritain ends his discussion with a lament that the youth of his day:

> (K)now a great deal about matter, natural facts, and human facts, but almost nothing about the soul... their naked nature is not mere nature, but nature which for centuries had been strengthened by reason and faith and accustomed to virtues, and which is now stripped of every prop. They stand in goodness upon nothing. (p. 86)

Such moral decay calls for the revival of religious faith but for those who do not believe, at very least, a revival of the moral power of reason since the gift of God's love, which is the only source of hope, comes as a gift to humanity through both grace and nature (p. 96).

Thomists and many Catholic schools, therefore, hope to find fertile ground for God within the processes of education, particularly within the liberal educationist tradition. Although some students may seek the life of spiritual perfection in service

to the church, most students can and must be trained in the natural realm in which moral wisdom can be found through reasoned human structures and traditions - even in those structures such as civility which is more closely linked to liberalism than to Christianity. Although canonical teachings and the realm of grace are paramount and must be passed on to the young, wherever moral wisdom is found, even in liberalism, Catholics hope to synthesize such wisdom and learn from it.

Within this framework of the teaching of religion, Roman Catholic schools are firmly rooted in an historical worldview and educational philosophy which commends the teaching for religious commitment but which also promotes the growth of tolerance and mutual understanding in a pluralistic society.

Educational Implications of Calvinism

Calvinism was born as part of the Protestant Reformation which rejected the Thomist synthesis of grace and nature and which challenged the Roman Catholic Church's ability or willingness to call into question and constantly reform its tradition and teachings on the basis of Scripture and the leading of the Spirit. The Biblical teaching to "take all things captive and to bring them into obedience to Christ" (II Cor. 10) was a Catholic obligation as well. But Calvinists questioned whether the Catholic church was, in fact, engaging in the task of transformation of all of life or whether, instead, it had made a wrong turn in accepting the Thomist synthesis and became stagnant by virtue of its worldview and its privileged position.

The Calvinist and Neo-Calvinist worldview and philosophy described in

Chapter 4 emphasizes the dynamic law-order structures of God's creation as revealed in Scripture and as witnessed in creation and the everyday lives of humanity. Neither liberalism, Thomism, capitalism, Marxism nor even Calvinism are exempt from the scrutiny of Word and Spirit nor of human experience. According to Skillen (1991):

> From a Calvinist viewpoint, what makes possible the differentiation of society as well as its integral ordering is neither a natural hierarchy under church supervision nor the autonomous shaping of a formless void by human beings claiming to be self-sufficient. Rather, what makes earthly life possible is ... the very order of God's Creation - the law of God calling human beings to be the creative fulfilment of their earthly responsibilities. The creative, energetic attention to life in this world inspired Calvin's love for and fear of the transcendent Creator-Redeemer is what gave a new boost to science, political constitutionalism, economic development, and much more. (p. 22)

According to Calvinists, the human duty is solely and exclusively to glorify God through love and service in every sphere of life. Education at school is therefore to lead students into an active discipleship of Christ, teaching for responsible action in this world. Education deals with exploring both the ontological reality of God's creation order and the teaching for students' commitment to the God who created and maintains this world.

Calvinist educators such as Wolterstorff (1980) and Van Brummelen (1988) see the home, the church and the school as three sphere's of society which nurture children. The state is a separate sphere and is charged with ordering a just society in which these three spheres can carry out their respective tasks freely.

The task of schools is to educate children for their lives of service in the Kingdom of God in its entirety - not, primarily as citizens of the state or as members of a church. Calvinist Christian schools teach students: (1) towards an individual

commitment to Christ, (2) towards an understanding of their task within the communal Body of Christ, (3) towards an understanding of their task to promote justice and healing for others, and (4) towards enabling students to participate in the transformation of social structures, the lives of their neighbours as well as of their own lives. Being faithful disciples of Christ requires:

> (A)mong many other things Christ taught, being pure in heart, living as peacemakers, loving our enemies, eschewing love of material possession and worldly standards for them, being ambassadors of reconciliation, opposing evil social structures, using our authority to serve others in humility, and maximizing our God-given abilities in service to Him. (Van Brummelen, 1988, pp. 6,7).

Christian schools must provide a supportive learning environment in which God is honoured and His creation order explored through an atmosphere and pedagogy where all children can contribute and feel accepted.

Central to understanding the Calvinist view of education is the concept of the religious heart as the central core of a human being, that which inescapably requires all people to commit themselves to service of the God of the Scriptures or to some other god, either transcendent (Muslim, Buddhist) or immanent (Marxism, liberalism). Neutrality of the heart is impossible because of God's image in all humans. Schools must therefore address the students' religious heart and the worldview to which teachers are committed in order to perform the teaching function completely.

Students are not solely blank slates (Locke), trainable objects (Skinner), nor pre-ordained unfolding plants (Piaget) say Calvinists. Although all such theories point to kernels of truth about human nature, "none of these views reflect the rich Biblical conception of humans as responsible images of God" (ibid., pp. 42,43). Similarly,

since God's Creation order is subject to all of God's norms such as ethical, economic, rational, aesthetic, social, and juridical ones, reason or rational thinking as articulated by Plato or Aristotle is not the order for life nor the divine element in humanity; it is only a part of the whole.

Since "out of the heart issues all things" (Col. 2), all parts of the curriculum and of life are inevitably linked to a person's religious commitment. A Calvinist Christian school curriculum seeks to address all things in the light of Christ, developing student's abilities to discern and reform the world, its social institutions and the lives of individuals. As Van Brummelen (1988) states:

> Students develop their abilities and insights in order to become vibrant Christians as family members, friends, consumers, workers, citizens, and church members. They learn about and experience the rightful place of science and technology, leisure and labour, communications and aesthetics, justice and love. (p. 96)

Calvinist Christian schools, in seeking first the Kingdom of God, do teach ways of life that stand in antithetical juxtaposition to other ways of life and encourage and enable students to be 'salt and light' in this world. Since it is God whose ordered creation upholds all things, it is not the subjective projections of one group in society that determine normative behaviours or structures. Responding to creational norms is difficult and is not the private domain of Christians or any other group to enforce or impose normative standards of practice for others. Calvinists are (should be) fully assured of their own total depravity to know that their best efforts are subject to the corruption of sin. Says Skillen (1992):

> The challenge for Christians is to learn how to live self-critical, loving, and modest lives as they seek to contribute to the health of the larger

> social order (all their neighbours) by standing for Christian principles and against other patterns that appear to lead to the destruction of social health, justice, stewardship, truth and love. (p. 66)

This framework of teaching and learning through religion of Calvinist Christian schools is firmly rooted in an historical worldview and educational philosophy which commends the teaching *for* religious commitment but which also advocates the growth of tolerance and mutual understanding in a pluralistic society.

Educational Implications of Liberalism

Because liberalism is not a unified philosophical position, the educational implications of liberalism are not universally held or agreed upon. Yet, liberalism has had a profound effect on the shaping of schooling, particularly since the acceptance of the concept of universal, public education in Canada. The general patterns evident in the public schools in Canada correspond most closely with those of liberal beliefs and philosophy.

What unites most liberals is their adherence to three principles: (1) the individual is to be free from coercion from the state or church, (2) the state is to be neutral between competing visions of the good life, and (3) autonomy of individual thought and reason is paramount. These three principles will be interpreted for their educational implications.

The need for freedom from coercion of church and state for the individual was a key concept in the influential writings of John Locke. Locke rejected the dominance of education by the tradition and authority of the state and church of his times and

stressed the need for empirical studies through the scientific method. His political views necessitated the strict adherence to the natural rights of the individual which meant that each individual is free, equal and independent and cannot be subject to others except through mutual consent of the governed. Education was to enable each individual to participate in civil life through the social contract. Schools should therefore teach a general, civic education based on the recognition of individual human rights and the social contract, the understanding of the functions of government, and the cultivation of civic virtues that would develop the process of government and therefore enhance life for the individual. Religion and matters of doctrine were private matters and were not to impose themselves on matters of state or of education. Religiously based schools were judged repressive because they indoctrinated children and were therefore guilty of being unscientific. Similarly, schools monopolized by the state, warned John Stuart Mill, would become a mere contrivance for moulding people to be exactly like one another and would easily become a despotism over the mind (O'Hear, 1981, p. 64). In Mill's view, education is best served when there are no preconceptions that will hamper the freedom of inquiry and when no areas of life are closed to scrutiny and reformation. Academic freedom must be maintained.

The state must also be neutral between competing conceptions of the good life according to liberals. For schools, this means that no one vision of the good life must be promoted. Tolerance of all viewpoints is a key virtue for an education that best serves the public good of all. Liberals wish to maintain a vital centre in schooling that will allow competing interests to interact in the marketplace of ideas in a setting which

adjudicates between all views using a common method of reasoned thought. Since in schooling there is no final authority in any area, the plurality of thought, beliefs and lifestyles will ensure that students encounter all points of view from which they will reasonably choose for themselves. Although schools teach existing methods and theories, it is hoped that students will eventually participate in the process of refining or criticizing these methods and theories to promote progress of lifestyle and learning. Recognizing that schooling does deprive children of some liberty, O'Hear (1981), as a modern liberal educator, justifies such deprivation to the extent that:

> It promotes his [the student's] own individual liberty and the respect he has for the liberties of others, ...it forms the basis necessary for personal decisions in life, [and]...will provide the basis for self-sufficiency. (p. 116)

Although moral education is inevitably a part of any schooling, no one view of morality may prevail. Instead, moral education aims for the development of qualities such as tolerance, objectivity, and a willingness to listen to others. It also aims for a freely chosen and internalized individual morality which does not need policing and which can be shared with others through thought and action. Moral education must also work on the natural sense that we have to sympathize and feel with others as people, in order to balance the individual need to act as a rational agent acting on freely chosen principles (p. 130). In this way, the imposition or indoctrination of any exterior conception of the good life on the individual is seen as impossible (save by unscrupulous means) and undesirable in schooling, according to liberalism.

Autonomy of thought and the efficacy of reason through the scientific method are promoted by liberalism as fundamental concepts in schooling. Says Isaiah Berlin

about the importance of rational autonomy:

> I wish my life and decisions to depend on myself, not on external forces of whatever kind. I wish to be the instrument of my own, not other men's acts of will. I wish to be a subject, not an object; to be moved by reasons, by conspicuous purposes, which are my own, not by causes which affect me, as it were from outside. I wish to be somebody, not nobody; a doer-deciding, not being decided for, self directed and not acted upon by external nature or by other men.... This is at least part of what I mean when I say that I am rational, and that it is my reason that distinguishes me as a human being from the rest of the world. (quoted in O'Hear, 1981, p. 57.)

Contemporary liberals heartily contest how this autonomous reason is to give shape to curriculum and pedagogy in school. One of the prime initiators in this contemporary debate is Paul Hirst who, in his "Liberal Education and the Nature of Knowledge" (1965), presents a modification of the Greek academic-rationalistic rationale for curriculum, one that emphasizes not merely topics or subjects but forms of knowledge constituted by justified true beliefs. Hirst notes that the Greek notion of liberal arts education was rooted in the significance of knowledge for the mind and the relationship between knowledge and reality (p.87). Liberal arts were liberal because they represented the actions of free men and because they freed the mind "to function according to its true nature, freeing reason from error and illusion and freeing man's conduct from wrong" (p.89). The seven liberal arts represented the attempt to gain a definition and justification based not on speculation or belief but solely on the nature and significance of knowledge itself (p. 89). However, Hirst points out that such definition and justification is problematic since it does not specify what kind of qualities and moral virtues are to be favoured nor how such knowledge is tied to some form of reality (p.90).

Hirst argues that a consistent concept of liberal education must be defined in terms of the forms of knowledge which he defines as "the complex ways of understanding experience which man has achieved, which are publicly specifiable and which are gained through learning" (p. 96-7). Knowledge is gained by "becoming aware of experience as structured, organized and made meaningful in some quite specific way ... a way otherwise unknown, and thereby com(ing) to have a mind in a fuller sense" (p. 98). "To have a mind basically involves coming to have experience articulated by means of various conceptual schemata" (p. 99). A true liberal arts education is therefore "no longer supported by epistemological and metaphysical doctrines" (p. 99). Rather, it is justified on the basis of that which is both "intelligible under publicly rooted concepts and is assessable according to accepted criteria" (p. 100). The ultimate liberal education is therefore based on these public criteria which can distinguish right from wrong, renders objectivity to knowledge, and redeems it from mere speculation or subjective beliefs (p. 101).

R.S. Peters, another prominent liberal educational philosopher, shares Hirst's emphasis on rational inquiry when he states that:

> Human life is a context in which the demands of reason are inescapable... This puts us, whether we like it or not, whether we admit it or not, under the demands of reason to justify and assess whatever comes before us. (quoted in O'Hear, 1981, p. 39)

The general acceptance of liberalism's pre-eminence of reason in human life by Canadian public schools ensures a de-emphasis of religion in schooling. At most, religious education is reduced to teaching *about* comparative religion; at least, religion is avoided or ignored.

The meaning and educational implications of tolerance concerning religious education becomes a contentious issue when defined from the Thomist, Calvinist and liberal points of view. That is the topic for Chapter 6.

CHAPTER 6

TOLERANCE AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In this chapter, the concept of tolerance as it relates to religious education will be defined and compared from a Thomist, Calvinist and liberal point of view. It will be argued that tolerance in religious education is conceptually well advanced from a Calvinist point of view, from a Thomist point of view and from a liberal point of view. This challenges the widely held view in Canadian educational circles that liberal public schools promote tolerance while religious schools are more likely to promote intolerance.

Towards A Working Definition Of Tolerance

The concept of tolerance is much debated and easily misunderstood especially in the context of religious and political tolerance since religious and political beliefs are matters of choice. It is generally and easily agreed that unavoidable circumstances of gender, race, age, socio-economic status or handicap should not be bases of intolerance. Although intolerance must be abhorred in these cases, it is not clear that tolerance is even a meaningful concept when addressing matters of circumstance. One is either male or female, young or old, poor or rich, able or disabled, black or white or something else by virtue of birth and historical circumstance. To be intolerant and to discriminate against my neighbour simply because s/he is any of the above is morally reprehensible, but to tolerate my neighbour being any of the above is meaningless if

one accepts the premise of the argument presented here.

Tolerance and intolerance become meaningful largely through beliefs that people hold regarding matters of circumstance. One can believe that one race is superior to another or not, that gender necessitates dominant or subservient social roles and position or not, and so on. If my neighbour is an Anglican or agnostic capitalist and I am a Hutterite or liberal pacifist, tolerance can be a meaningful concept in structuring the basis of how we live together on the same street simply because these are matters of individual choice, i.e., of beliefs, not circumstance. As Mendus (1989) argues:

> (T)alk of toleration in the racial context is misleading, for to speak of toleration implies that the thing tolerated can be changed - that it is something alterable, and that it is to the agent's discredit that he or she does not alter it. It implies that there really is something wrong with belonging to another race, or being of a different colour, and thus lends some spurious credibility to the claims of racists. (p.16)

Confusion is compounded when matters of race and religious beliefs are interconnected such as with practising Jewish people. Tolerance is therefore best understood in the context of peoples' religious and political beliefs. It is also the place where its meaning is most disputed and where intolerance is easily bred in the name of promoting tolerance.

Religious intolerance in any society is wrong. It implies that a person reacts too severely to another person's religious beliefs and practices in a way that is physically or psychologically harmful and/or which distorts that person's religious position. A religiously intolerant person refuses to accept, bear with, or endure the religious beliefs of another, where those beliefs and associated actions are considered

to be inferior or wrong and, therefore, unacceptable. Intolerance is usually displayed in acts of violence, threat or deception (Newman, 1982, p. 18). It can also be argued that intolerance is inadvertently committed by well intentioned, seemingly gentle people, who mistakenly or too enthusiastically proselytize their own point of view with undue regard for the position or the rights of others not of like mind. Regretfully, history records ample evidence of religious intolerance by people of many faiths and denominations. No such acts will be defended here and will hopefully be avoided in this analysis.

Subscribing in general to the moral worthiness of tolerance as a principle does not imply that one will be tolerant of anything. Tolerance is always context specific, conceptually and in practice.

Religious tolerance is both an acceptance of and a rejection of the religious beliefs of others. This paradox seems contradictory, but it need not be. Religious beliefs are fundamental and are of utmost importance to those who hold them. Jesus is either 'the only way to the Father' or He is not. God either created the world or He did not. The Koran is either authoritative or it is not. The historical Jesus either was the Christ or He was a scoundrel. These are not trivial matters! Tolerance requires that one cares a great deal about what is tolerated. It also necessitates fundamental disagreement with those one is tolerating, that is, a rejection of the beliefs someone else holds, not a rejection of the person holding the beliefs. The acceptance inherent in tolerance comes in displaying a positive attitude or affirmative action towards those whose beliefs one rejects. Only then can we meaningfully speak of religious

tolerance.

Tolerance is very much a matter of balancing or of degree. If my neighbour and I fundamentally disagree in our religious beliefs but completely ignore each other, we would not be worthy of being called tolerant; at best, we are not intolerant. If we communicate to some degree and grow in our mutual respect for each other through some acts of love or understanding, then we are tolerant. But tolerance does not require that we ignore our differences, nor that we resolve them lest the first pole of tolerance, namely disagreement or disapproval, be lost. In our daily lives, my neighbour and I must choose to cut our lawn on Saturday or Sunday, invite each other over for supper (or not), attend community league meetings to address neighbourhood issues, volunteer at a local crisis centre, send our children to one or the other school, allow or not allow our children to date each other, and attend or not attend a church of our choice. I may choose to participate with my neighbour in some of these activities but not in others. Not participating with my neighbour in some of these activities need not necessarily constitute intolerance. At each of these levels, one can tolerate in different degrees or not at all. Thus, "we always need to inquire into what area and to what degree a tolerator is tolerant" (Thiessen 1987, p. 75).

Epistemological relativism is not a recipe for promoting tolerance. Most members of religious groups and denominations are convinced of the truth of their position and should not be required to 'play down' their beliefs as Newman (1982, p.148) suggests, in order to facilitate tolerance. If I believe that Jesus is coming again, soon, then I must tell my neighbour as an act of love for him and in fulfilment of

Christ's commission to me to "go, and tell all nations" (Matt.28). If my neighbour believes God is dead, he must and will tell me too. If we end up fighting we promote intolerance. If we ignore each other because of our difference, we are not tolerant because indifference is not to be identified with tolerance. If we forbid our children to marry each other because of religious differences but they elope hoping that 'love conquers all', the parents are not necessarily less tolerant than the bridal pair unless the couple is prevented from exercising their free choice through physical restraint or murder. If we maintain avenues of discussion and debate in order to enhance mutual respect and understanding, yet never come to agreement, we promote tolerance. At very least, tolerance requires a 'putting up with'; at best, it entails a positive call to promote mutual respect through dialogue and learning. We cannot be required to play down our beliefs, or to settle or eliminate our differences through dialogue. We can only be warned not to proselytize in an offensive manner. If I go to burn my neighbour, the police (state) should stop me. If I stuff a Bible into his mailbox, I should not be stopped or punished for the reason that religion is to be kept private. A 'no flyers please' note on the mailbox should inform me that my proselytizing is becoming offensive.

The Separation Of Church And State

According to John Locke and subsequently to the writers of the U.S. Constitution, the separation of church and state is an obvious and logically defensible position which will ensure maximum tolerance. Liberalism maintains that a distinction

exists and must be maintained between private matters (including religion or 'church') and public matters which are matters of state (those that are neutral or non-religious). According to liberals, tolerance will best grow if private matters such as religious beliefs are kept privately by individuals and are not transposed into but are kept separate from the public realm such as in schooling.

But to a Calvinist or Catholic such a separation is, in an important sense, impossible and therefore misleading since Christians believe there is not a square inch of this world of which God does not say, "This is mine". Although the role and responsibility of state and church are different and distinct, there can be no separation between faith or religion and the state and no separation between private and public realms. The sense in which this is so will now be explored to illustrate that tolerance can best grow through the integration of matters of faith and of state, not through an attempt to keep them separate.

The Christian faith is absolute and all pervasive in that it confesses that Jesus is "the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through me" (John 14:6). The Bible also calls for an unconditional love for enemies (Lk.6:27ff) and for tolerance which is loving, patient and kind to all (Rom. 2). A Christian view of the state, as opposed to, say, a liberal view, holds that there is no authority except that which God has established; (the state) is "God's servant to do you good" (Rom 13). The state is God's instrument of public legal care for everyone and must not favour one person or community over another regardless of their religion or irreligion - the Biblical basis for political tolerance.

Whatever basis exists for the function of the state, be it liberal, Biblical or other, this basis will inevitably play a significant role in matters of state policy such as racism, poverty, education, foreign aid and so on. To suggest that such matters are neutral or not based on any religious or irreligious basis is a confusion to Christians. As Brian Barry (1990) argues so well, even a liberal view of the state is not well served by a push towards neutrality since "the defense of liberal institutions requires those with a liberal outlook to go on the offensive and promote liberalism actively" (p. 56). Holding strong beliefs and being tolerant may go hand in hand; they are not necessarily incompatible (Thiessen, 1987, p. 77). Proselytizing these beliefs is equally in concert with John Stuart Mill's liberal-utilitarian view of promoting a marketplace of ideas in which people are free to express their beliefs in order to avoid the tyranny of the majority. What good is a marketplace if one may not actively sell?

Even if the separation of church and state is to be honoured as a principle for social structures, it cannot be interpreted only as a requirement to keep religion out of matters of the state as a safeguard against past sins of the church. The First Amendment to the United States Constitution and the "notwithstanding" clause of the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms have effectively sanctioned that the state's interest and ruling in matters concerning religious tolerance be paramount and binding on all. Newman (1982) therefore argues that religious leaders be given a greater role and responsibility in public issues concerning the practical and theoretical limits to and opportunities for religious liberty (p. 143). The recent Ontario Court of Appeals decision to uphold a ruling that Christian and Jewish schools should not be

funded although this constitutes discrimination was based on the 'notwithstanding' clause since the viability of the public school might be called into question. Some would argue that such a decision violates the separation of church and state principle, but from the opposite end since the state is now lording it over the church. At very least, it shows that church and state cannot, in fact, be maintained separate in every sense. Our understanding of tolerance is therefore not increased by attempts to keep private and public matters and church and state matters completely separate as Locke and subsequent liberals have attempted.

Religious Tolerance And Education

The concept of religious tolerance was promoted by the principles of the Protestant Reformation which emphasized the need for all persons to be free to hold their own religious convictions. Although early on in the Reformation, only the Anabaptists practised such tolerance, mainline Protestant Christianity gradually began to see the value of such freedom. The Roman Catholic Church has grown to accept this concept as well as evidenced in John Paul II message, "If You Want Peace, Respect The Conscience Of Every Person" (1991). Tolerance assumes that people differ in their deeply held beliefs and asks that these differences be recognized, understood and allowed to function freely within a socially pluralistic democracy.

Tolerance must hold not only for individuals but also for communities which must be free to promote common purposes based on shared beliefs. John Locke's assumption that human nature is found in the things of this material world and not in

the Divine ordinance of God allowed the citizens to order society as they saw fit. This allowed Locke to propose a public-good/private-interest barrier between the state and church. In his attempt to find an accommodation between Christianity and the affairs of the state, Locke, in fact, provided the foundation for a liberal view of society in which religion is a private matter and must not influence affairs of state. Further, whereas the rights of individuals may thereby be protected, the rights of communities and associations which function within the public arena, such as schools, labour unions and churches and which seek to do work in accord with their religious principles, are not protected. In fact, in correcting the Constantinian position regarding the maximum entanglement of Christianity and the state, Locke 'threw the baby out with the bathwater' by reducing religion of any kind to the private sphere and defining the interests of the state as purely secular (Skillen, 1991, p. 323ff).

Because tolerance by itself may not be sufficient in education lest it be mistakenly seen as merely 'putting up with' those with whom one disagrees, the concept of 'understanding' has been added to tolerance as an important element in education to foster growth of mutual respect. Without understanding or the growth of mutual respect, tolerance, which is merely 'putting up with', can potentially slide into intolerance or indifference. Jewish children must learn about Christianity and Christians about Islam and so on, in a way that promotes understanding of each other's beliefs and human experience. This will of necessity also include points of fundamental disagreement but this need not necessarily lead to intolerance, in fact, it can promote tolerance. Tolerant schools of any kind will ensure that in the matter of

religious belief, students are encouraged to form and articulate their own beliefs and are well informed and respectful of those whose beliefs differ from their own. To the extent that this is done in schools, tolerance will grow.

Governments can promote the growth of religious tolerance by ensuring that religion is not ignored in public school curricula. Chapter 2 has argued that although the Tolerance and Understanding criteria for textbooks require a fair presentation of religious beliefs in the lives of people, a sample of such textbooks neglects religious beliefs almost entirely. Such neglect can be seen as deception through epistemological force or neglect (Thiessen, 1987, p. 74). Schools based on religious beliefs are equally to be encouraged to operate in a responsible manner by presenting and representing the beliefs of others fairly. All schools must meet standards of promoting tolerance and understanding.

The Limits of Tolerance

Tolerance has its limits since situations exist in which tolerance is anything but an appropriate response. Defining these limits is difficult and must be done with a certain level of ambiguity which will allow actual situations to be judged from time to time on the basis of two key principles, namely veracity and responsibility (Tinder, 1976, as described in Van Brummelen 1990).

The standard of veracity or truthfulness demands that schools and individuals clearly articulate their beliefs and act in accordance with them. Says Van Brummelen (1990):

> (A) school...may work out the implications of its beliefs for its own program, but must at the same time be willing to show that other presuppositions lead to other conclusions, and present other points of view fairly and honestly. (p. 10)

No school system is inherently intolerant, but the standard of truthfulness requires that there be fair representation of the beliefs of others, that there be no misrepresentation and that biases are clearly stated and understood.

The standard of responsibility for individuals and schools requires that one be able and willing to give an account of one's actions to public authorities. At a base level, this would restrict actions which are violent, obscene, or abusive to others. Schools, for example, must provide a certain level of public assurance that their educational program meets the basic goals of education of the state. The manner in which these goals are met should allow for great variety of curriculum and pedagogy but the standard of responsibility holds for all. If educational philosophies which do not correspond to majority opinion within the educational community exist, schools based on such philosophies and which meet the criteria of responsibility must be tolerated, not ignored or discriminated against. Tolerance is practised when schools and government both act in mutually responsible ways that promote diversity and accountability.

Although veracity and responsibility are ambiguous standards, they do serve as a preliminary step in stating the norms for tolerance and for calling into question or limiting those who seem to promote intolerance. The question of who determines what is ultimately a truthful or responsible representation of the beliefs of others is a difficult one and seems to be a key issue in the development of nations throughout

history. Ultimately it is the responsibility of the state to determine in matters of public policy and of the individual in relation to the choices made on the basis of his/her own beliefs. Under ideal conditions a just and generous state would favour and promote maximum tolerance and understanding through a pluralistic structuring of social institutions. That such a pluralism does in fact promote maximum tolerance is an empirical matter for which there is some evidence (Thiessen, 1987), some of which was presented in Chapter 1.

Comparing Calvinist, Thomist and Liberal Views of Tolerance

Calvinism and Thomism are both Christian belief systems which view the Bible as authoritative in regard to religious tolerance. Although they share a similar starting point, their respective worldviews and educational philosophies differ considerably in defining religious tolerance in education. Liberalism rejects the authority of any transcendent revelation in public matters and defines religious tolerance in education on the basis of what is rationally feasible and desirable within a free and democratic society.

Calvinists and Thomists both confess love of God and love of one's neighbour to be the central law of their lives and thus the primary standard for political and educational policy and action. In these belief systems, such love (*agape*) was first shown by God who, "while we were yet sinners", sent his Son to redeem the world from sin (Rom. 5:8) and it is the sacrificial and unmerited love which God bestowed on all people that must now be imitated in human action. "If one could love others

without judging them, asking anything of them, or thinking of one's own needs, one would meet the Christian standard" (Tinder, 1989, p. 70). Although sin still abounds and distorts efforts of neighbours to love each other as God loves them, says Tinder, those whom God has exalted and restored are called freely to exalt and restore the lives of others as their primary service to God's fulfilment of His Kingdom work. Christians believe that tolerance demands a standard of care for one another, a standard of equality in which no one is condemned by others since "all are one in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 2), and a standard of fairness which respects the image of God in all people regardless of the religious choices they make. Tolerance also demands cautious hesitation in matters of religious disagreement as "a mark of respect for God and for the creatures with whom we share the earth" (Tinder 1989, p. 85). Up to this point, Thomists and Calvinists agree on the Biblical basis for tolerance.

The disagreement stems, in part, from two distinct interpretations of the text found in Matthew 16:

> But what about you? he [Jesus] asked. Who do you say I am? Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven. And I tell you that you are Peter [which means rock], and on this rock I will build my church, ...I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven... (Mt. 16:15 - 19)

When Jesus used the expression 'this rock', it is unclear whether he was referring to Peter or to Peter's confession of faith which God had revealed to him. Thomists contend that Jesus referred to Peter himself, thus providing the basis for a hierarchical form of church government in which Peter and his successors, the popes who are the

vicars of Christ on earth, head the God-ordained hierarchy. Calvinists contend that Jesus referred to Peter's confession of faith as the rock on which the church is built, thus providing the basis of a Presbyterian form of church government in which the freely offered confessions of faith of individuals form the basis of the church community on earth.

If the Calvinist interpretation is to be maintained, religious tolerance begins with a firm confession of Christ as Lord. It also recognizes that not all people make a similar confession but have chosen other gods or no god. Although Calvinist Christians wish that all people would share their confession and will seek to persuade all to do so, tolerance requires respect for the confessions of all people and faith communities since they are evidence of the image of God at work in his creatures. Tolerance even requires that one questions one's own beliefs and actions in an effort to constantly reform in the light of God's Word and the work of his Spirit. This view could be seen as implied in Jesus' parable of the weeds in which:

> The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared. The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No," he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters; First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.' (Matt. 13,24-30)

This teaching can be regarded as referring to the evils of judging others through intolerant actions meant to 'clean out the weeds right now'. There is asserted,

however, a very definite difference between the good seed and the weeds. Nevertheless, God reserves the right to uproot in due time and demands that sunshine and nourishment be afforded to the entire field until He returns.

Politically, this view calls for a structural confessional pluralism in which individuals and the communities of which each person is a constitutive part, are free to confess and act as they best see fit in response to God's call. Government by itself or through the consent of the governed is not the prime authority for all of life; God is, whether people believe it or not. Governments fulfil their duty to God as His servant for our good, when they promote public justice which includes the protection and encouragement of individuals and communities to freely exercise the religious beliefs of their choice in the many and distinct spheres of life. Because God permits all to make free choices, it is important for Calvinists to grow in understanding and respect of those who are choosing, even though such choices may or not be obedient to God's call as they perceive it.

In education, God's call is to be heard in all parts of school life including curriculum and pedagogy. Fostering religious tolerance comes through a confession of faith in God and a recognition of God being at work in all people. Calvinists, therefore, by the dictates of their own religious standpoint, ought to tolerate Thomists and liberals even though they disagree somewhat or profoundly.

Calvinists and Thomists disagree somewhat in their view of tolerance in religious education. Both share the Biblical basis for tolerance as described above and agree that love (*agape*) and caring (*caritas*) are key ingredients towards practising

tolerance in all of life in ways that are fair and hesitant to condemn the beliefs and practices of others. Their disagreement stems, in part, from their interpretation of Matthew 16 and its implications for a hierarchical structure of the church and society. It also stems, in part, from their disagreement concerning the validity of the grace/nature distinction and the Thomist attempt to institute and synthesize these two realms. Both Calvinists and Thomists meet the first criteria for tolerance, namely that one must be sure of one's own beliefs. They differ in their view of the role of the state and church in ensuring tolerance for individuals, institutions, and associations. Thomist and Calvinist scholars are themselves not always clear nor agreed on the precise nature and role of church and government and the practical implications of God's hand working in and through the lives of individuals and institutions. We can therefore only hope here to point to areas of disagreement and possible confusion, not resolve them.

If the Thomist interpretation of Matthew 16 is to be maintained, the role of the Roman Catholic Church through its vicar of Christ, the Pope, is central and dominant in all of life. The hierarchy of the Church holds the keys of the kingdom of God here on earth and can speak authoritatively (*ex cathedra*) on all matters of individual morality, and on the actions of states. When the Church speaks in such a manner, it holds equal authority to that of Biblical revelation and, because it is infallible, may not be questioned. This may sound harsh and perhaps anti-tolerant. Many Roman Catholics would balance the theological argument with the need for pragmatic softening of such a view. The Second Vatican Council and the papal encyclical on

tolerance (Pope John Paul, 1990) also mean to soften the impact of such an unequivocal interpretation of Scripture. Yet the difference between a Calvinist and Catholic view of the role of the church must begin with a recognition of the implications of taking one or the other view of the authority of the church as an institution. It is either a hierarchical structure with ultimate authority over personal matters and those of state or a gathering of those who share a common confession of Christ who participate as Christians but not as church members in the public arena including matters of the state; it cannot be both.

The Thomist synthesis of grace and nature is a position with which Calvinists do not concur. Skillen (1991) comments that:

> At the heart of recent Catholic social thought, rooted in the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas, is the assumption that human reason, unaided by faith, is capable of grasping the governing principles of nature and the normative structure of a plural society. This is possible, the argument goes, because natural law which is the norm or standard for social life is open to anyone who possesses rational faculties. (p. 378)

Quoting Pope Leo XIII, Skillen explains that for Thomists, the structures of social life are attainable by all people "through the light of reason alone", regardless of their religious persuasion since "God did not instill the light of reason into the human mind in vain" (p. 378). Calvinists question such a view of the efficacy of reason outside of faith and within the limited natural realm which, to them, seems closer to a secular (i.e. earth-bound) liberal view than to a Christian one. Thomists argue that the realms of nature "possess an autonomy - a relative independence and self-determination - in distinction from the supernatural realm of grace" (p. 380). Grace ultimately completes and perfects nature but, in the here and now, reasonable actions suffice. For

Calvinists, a Thomist view of reason does not take adequate account of the effects of sin on people's ability to reach a common understanding of generally accepted principles for the structuring of society regardless of religious belief. Even an empirical argument, say Calvinists, is difficult to make in support of the Thomist view in light of historical developments which do not clearly evidence a growth of religious tolerance nor of the existence of widely held, generally accepted principles of a pluralistic society (p. 379).

Thomists view the hierarchical church as the sacramental agent and universal authority in the realms of grace and nature, while the state is the universal authority only in the realm of nature. In the realm of grace, faith is supreme, in the realm of nature, reason is sufficient but is completed by grace. This causes some confusion in determining the role of the state in ensuring the growth of the common good in a pluralistic society which is religiously diverse and divided. At what point must the Church allow seemingly reasonable actions by the state in the natural realm to prevail and at what point must the Church intervene in order to allow the common good as interpreted by the Church to prevail? This may or may not be less problematic within the Catholic Church itself and within its schools, but it becomes deeply problematic in a society that is predominantly liberal, or at least, non-Christian.

If a Thomist view of tolerance is defined primarily on the basis of the authority of the state within the natural realm, it will approximate the liberal view of tolerance which is founded on individual autonomy although Thomists do not share the main tenets of a liberal view of tolerance. If tolerance is defined primarily on the basis of

the authority of the church, it may lose the standard of hesitancy because the church speaks infallibly (*ex cathedra*). A recent manual on priestly behaviour issued by the Vatican warned priests that:

> The Roman Catholic Church won't tolerate open criticism and reminded them [priests] to stick to clerical clothes, abstain from sex and stay out of politics....The church is not a democracy but a hierarchical organization that won't allow criticism of its teachings. So called 'democratization' becomes a grave temptation because it leads to a denial of the authority...of Christ. (Stay away from, 1994, p. A-5)

That such a pronouncement is judged to be necessary points to the fact that although Thomism is firmly held in the minds of Church leaders, it is difficult to maintain consistently in the experience of everyday life in modern society. Even though it can be argued that such pronouncements apply only to priests who are special servants of the Church, Church members and Catholic schools may experience some confusion in how such statements apply to them in their service to the Church and to the public arena as in education and politics.

In education, Thomists do not contend, as Calvinists do, that faith must shape all areas of the curriculum and pedagogy since Thomists allow for the efficacy of reason itself (untouched by faith) to lead teachers and students into the truth of God and the nature of this world. Thomists do believe that, ultimately, all teaching and learning finds its place in attaining the beatific vision of God. Says Pope John Paul (1990):

> Those who acknowledge the relationship between ultimate truth and God himself will also acknowledge the right, as well as the duty, of non-believers to seek the truth which can lead them to discover the Mystery of God and humbly accept it. (p. 5)

That the Church ultimately defines where such distinctions will fall in practical matters such as moral, political and economic actions by individuals and governments can be a source of confusion for Catholic educators. Many Catholic educators and students are not priests (i.e., special servants) and are free to explore issues within the bounds of reason. Many Catholic schools limit religious education to some courses taught by specialists (Carney, 1985). Not all Catholic teachers need be confirmed, professing and actively participating members of the Roman Catholic Church. Yet, to use an earlier analogy, the authority of the Church can at any time determine what is seed and what is weed and such judgment is not to be questioned but must be taught and upheld. This can leave Catholic school teachers confused when the curriculum requires that matters on which the Church has spoken such as family life, sexual preference, birth control, abortion, marriage, divorce, participation in the political process, economic systems, and so on, are explored through reason in the classroom. One emphasis of Thomism requires a fostering of tolerance and mutual respect for the beliefs of others through love and caring. According to Pope John Paul (1990):

> The Catholic Church has willingly sought to encourage every form of honest cooperation for the sake of promoting peace. She will continue to make her own contribution towards this cooperation by forming the consciences of her members in openness towards others and respect for them, in that tolerance which accompanies the search for truth, and in a spirit of solidarity. (p. 16)

Another emphasis of Thomism requires a condemnation of dissenting beliefs and does not allow any respect for beliefs which the Church has infallibly stated to be false for all time. Says Pope John Paul (1990):

> In searching for the truth the Christian has recourse to divine revelation,

> which in Christ is present in all its fullness. Christ has entrusted the Church with the mission of proclaiming this truth, and the whole Church has the duty of remaining faithful to that truth. My most serious responsibility as the Successor of Peter is precisely this: to ensure this constant fidelity by confirming my brothers and sisters in their faith. More than anyone else, the Christian ought to feel the obligation to conform his conscience to the truth. (p.17)

Finding a way to harmonize both emphases in the classroom is a difficult and often confusing task for Catholic educators.

Liberalism is widely recognized for its ability to promote tolerance and understanding. A liberal view of religious tolerance is similar to Calvinist and Thomist views in that it asks that differences between people of differing religious persuasion be understood and mutually respected. It differs from Calvinist and Thomist views by maintaining the independent and autonomous choice of each individual to be paramount and in need of protection and promotion by the state.

Many proponents of liberalism claim that only public liberal schools can be tolerant while religious schools cannot because religious schools indoctrinate the dogma of a less than freely chosen community. Says Ivan DeFaveri:

> The limiting of experience and deliberate restriction of outlook, this denying youth the information that they would ordinarily want if placed in a less oppressive environment, this is precisely what is happening to some children in, God help us, the name of "religious education" in some so-called schools in many countries. It is supported by the reactionary belief still heartbreakingly common in many cultures, that parents have the right to do what they wish to the psychic lives of separate human beings who happen to be their biological children.....The person who is in the best position to deal with issues related to tolerance is the liberally educated person. (DeFaveri , 1986, pp. 188, 203)

The argument presented here questions the liberal claim that tolerance is contingent on

individual choice and the exercise of autonomous rational reflection.

Liberalism holds freedom for the individual in high regard but it fails to give an adequate account of the role of communities such as families, nations, denominations and so on. Liberalism encounters difficulty with its somewhat exclusive treatment of associations in terms of voluntary choices made by individuals through social contract. In the words of John Stuart Mill's essay On Liberty:

> The only part of the conduct of anyone for which he is amenable to society is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns himself, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own mind and body, the individual is sovereign. (as quoted in Mendus, 1989, p. 47)

Obligations to the community are limited to those that are self-imposed and are universally owed. However, people are members of families, races, cities and nations *prior to* the exercise of their free choice. The individual's identity is constituted, at least in part, by being part of such communities. Although liberals would not deny that such associations exist, liberalism searches for ways of unecumbering individuals from unchosen associations. Adults who wish to change their communal associations should and will do so freely, but it is not a given that this is good per se.

For Christians, the creation ordinance that "it is not good for man to be alone" (Gen. 2) is interpreted to mean that people are, by created nature, social creatures and not primarily individuals; i.e., people are *inter*dependent *prior* to being *in*dependent although the two are not mutually exclusive. This, for Christians, is not adequately recognized in statements such as the Goals of Basic Education for Alberta which states that:

> The ultimate aim of education is to develop the abilities of the individual in order to fulfil personal aspirations while making a positive contribution to society. (Goals, 1978)

Parents, according to Christians, have the responsibility for meeting the child's need for communal belonging and must be given the freedom to meet that responsibility to the best of their understanding. Christian parents will want to make the communal life of the child, at home and at school, have the quality of Christian values because they consider them the best values. If liberalism is taken too literally, too young, the young could find themselves left, long before they are able, to decide the shape of their lives themselves. That kind of independence is unrealistic and ultimately cruel.

Similarly, the final report of the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding in Alberta states that:

> It is essential to the very perpetuation of our democratic institutions and the respect inherent in the system for the individual and his/her freedom of choices, that these qualities [such as critical thinking, inquiry, rational thinking, independence, etc.] be developed and sustained so that our students learn to make judgments based on factual, objective knowledge and, above all, independence of thought. (Ghitter, 1984b, p. 77)

Such statements do not give adequate regard to the beliefs of those who give primary value to young people's interdependence as a necessary foundation for their independence. The aim of Christian parents to provide a structured communal life for their children while at the same time nurturing springs of independent thought necessary for adulthood is an honourable and realistic aim.

The liberal distinction between the public realm which deals with objective knowledge and the private realm in which religion plays a role, a distinction to which many Christians object, seems also to be unquestionably accepted by the Committee

on Tolerance and Understanding when it considers itself reminded by Dr. DeFaveri that:

> In regard to social matters, they [teachers] will, for example, realize that their public role as a teacher may demand actions that are at variance with their private morality. (ibid., p. 78)

When such liberal perspectives on promoting individual freedom and relegating religion to the private realm are imposed on others through the power of the state rather than only being judiciously proselytized, they become intolerant rather than promoting tolerance towards those who emphasize the preeminence of community identity and obligations for the young. Dr. Thiessen reminded the Committee on Tolerance and Understanding that:

> Philosophically or religiously neutral curriculum is...impossible. Given the variety of philosophical and religious positions held by people in our society, it follows that a uniform curriculum in a public school system will necessarily be found offensive to some in our society. It will, in fact, violate the principle of religious freedom. Thus many religious parents, for whom education is inextricably intertwined with religion, find the system of public education to be religiously intolerant. (ibid., p. 107)

Precisely because a genuine belief in Christianity or in liberalism can be coerced over time (Barry, 1990), a state based on liberal principles would, over time, promote one vision of the good life and therefore violate its own liberal neutrality principles as well as the principles of non-liberals. Mendus (1989) similarly argues that liberals face a serious dilemma in that:

> The need for neutrality is created by the fact of diversity, yet the application of neutrality is possible only on the assumption that diversity is underpinned by unity - at least about the propriety of the neutrality principle itself. (p. 87)

The liberal basis for tolerance therefore turns in on itself since a commitment to

neutrality and autonomy is itself a commitment to something - something which liberals resist or refuse to define as a worldview which specifies a belief about the nature of who people ultimately are and what constitutes a particular but debatable view of the good life.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that a Calvinist view of religious tolerance begins with a firm confession of Christ as Lord. It also recognizes that not all people make a similar confession but have chosen other gods or no god. Although Calvinist Christians wish that all people would share their confession and will seek to persuade all to do so, religious tolerance within the limits of veracity and responsibility requires respect for the confessions of all people and faith communities since they are evidence of the image of God at work in his creatures. A Thomist view of religious tolerance is problematic because of its hierarchical view of church government but does allow for a broad interpretation and expression of civil and political tolerance within the realm of nature. A liberal view of religious tolerance is based on the autonomy and equality of all individuals. It has difficulty being tolerant of anyone who does not accept liberal presumptions about individualism, autonomy and the state's need and ability to remain neutral between competing conceptions of the good life. If it allows for greater latitude in these areas, it becomes less liberal, but perhaps, more tolerant.

A just state, serving all citizens would allow liberal, Calvinist, Thomist and other initiatives in education to flourish. In such a state, religious tolerance and understanding would prosper.

CHAPTER 7
CONCLUSIONS

The Committee On Tolerance And Understanding

The Government of Alberta reacted quickly and properly in calling for an assessment of the veracity and responsibility of tolerance in Alberta schools after the discovery of racist teachings in a public school. Mr. Keegstra was not faulted for influencing students per se, but for inciting hatred through deception based, in this case, on historically inaccurate or unproven grounds. He therefore violated both the standards of veracity and of responsibility. Any teacher who wilfully attempts to force students to accept another person's ready-made mind and give up their own must be called to task in a similar manner.

By selecting the religious teachings and political status of private schools as its first "target", and by making strong judgements on hastily prepared and inadequate research, the committee's first public work itself suffered from a profound lack of tolerance and understanding. Said the Committee's report:

> Clearly, no society can function if any significant number of its people withdraw into self-righteous isolation. The give and take in the marketplace of ideas that gives democracy its resilience and enables it to adapt, is the same process that enables individuals to adapt. In the same way, the desire for narrow certainty that creates totalitarian nations also creates intolerant individuals, hostile and frightened by openness and uncertainty. (Ghitter, 1984a, p. 16)

When Mr. Ghitter himself found the "prize case of intolerance" concerning 'false religions' in a Christian textbook (De Moor, 1980), he neglected to look further in the

text to see that it repeatedly recommended inviting representatives of these religions to class to present their point of view. To suggest from a Christian point of view that other religions are false was evidence enough for the Committee. Curriculum materials in Roman Catholic schools which made similar claims about the truth of Christianity were not referenced in the report.

The final report presented a more tolerant position which admitted that "private school supporters...do not wish to offend anyone advertently or inadvertently and...do not wish their children to be limited by an overly narrow or self-serving curriculum" (Ghitter, 1984b, p. 113). However, it once again referenced the 'false religions' text as unacceptable and intolerant.

The Committee on Tolerance and Understanding provided valuable insights and recommendations concerning intolerance in all Alberta's schools, especially in matters concerning people's circumstance such as race, gender, and so on. The Committee failed, however, to shed much light on the concept of tolerance in matters of religion and political beliefs. If anything, it continued to promote the liberal view that tolerance can only be promoted through shared experiences by individuals in a public secular school setting. This provided little tolerance for Calvinist and Thomist school systems which are based on established and reasoned worldviews and which are able to promote religious tolerance and understanding in their own unique manner.

The Tolerance And Understanding Review Process

The T+U review process as described in Chapter 2 is an important step in the

approval of textbooks and curriculum materials for use in Alberta schools. The Guidelines and Focus Statements are comprehensive and require that all books be screened not only for instances of intolerance but also for their ability to promote tolerance including religious tolerance.

The Curriculum Audit (Alberta Education, 1985) was an important first step in promoting tolerance and removing intolerance. Particularly, it faulted numerous books for not providing representations of various religious beliefs and practices. The research presented in this paper suggests, however, that the T+U process has not been steadfast in promoting religious tolerance in student resources. Failure to do so could well result in the removal of all mention of the role of religion in people's lives. Not only is this distressing to those who believe religion to be an important part of people's lives, but it must also be distressing for those who advocate the need for shared experiences in public schools if these experiences are to be realized within the classroom and not just in extra-curricular activities or in hallways. The fact that matters of religion and political beliefs are contentious should drive all schools to confront such issues, not reject or ignore their existence. In the words of Galston (1989):

> The greatest threat to children in modern liberal societies is not that they will believe in something too deeply, but that they will believe in nothing very deeply at all. Even to achieve the kind of free self-reflection that many liberals prize, it is better to begin by believing something. (p. 101)

Weeren (1986) adds:

> It is worth noting that well-intentioned omissions can paradoxically have the effect of excessive influence. For example, if a health curriculum,

> to avoid risk of controversy, deals with human sexuality only in physiological terms, it may encourage students to regard sexual relations as primarily a physical matter rather than one involving such values as respect for persons, responsibility and commitment. Common to all forms of undue influence by educators is an unjustifiable curtailment of the students' freedom to develop. (p. 22)

The T+U review process can be an effective instrument in promoting tolerance and understanding in all schools only if it continues to actively promote the discussion of beliefs and religious expression in curriculum materials and in the classrooms of Alberta schools. Failing to do so will promote intolerance through neglect.

The Charges of Indoctrination and Secularization

If the main premise of this thesis that at least three distinct and educationally intelligible type of worldviews are at work in Canadian schools is true, tolerance and understanding as defined by any of these worldviews would require that greater care be taken in levelling the charge of indoctrination against denominational schools and the charge of unwarranted secularization against public schools. Christians must be encouraged to re-examine their criticisms that public schools are no longer Christian 'as they should be' and that they underhandedly inculcate liberal secular humanism instead. Liberals must be encouraged to take a second look at religious education as a viable means of educating students whose parents and/or who themselves choose to attend such schools, rather than immediately suspecting such schools of intolerance and indoctrination. Holding a belief system does not in itself entail either indoctrination or intolerance.

Even if a strong argument can be made that today's public schools were once

Protestant Christian schools and should therefore return to teaching Christianity (Chapt.3), such argument does not serve the reality of the Canadian experience today. Without recounting the history of Canadian education, it can be reasonably agreed that, even at the time that only Christian schools existed in early Canada, the needs of native groups and members of other religions were not being adequately met in education. The multicultural mosaic of Canadian society has increased rapidly since then.

The public school today, by and large, meets the needs of those who profess liberalism, agnosticism, atheism, and other beliefs which do not deny the importance of teaching *about* religion but who object to the teaching *of* any particular religion as part of the school curriculum. Although the public school system may be faulted for neglecting to teach about religion altogether contrary to their own goals, it need not necessarily be faulted for taking the main principles of liberalism as its foundation. And if remaining neutral between competing conceptions of the good is indeed a goal for public schools, then the Ontario Court of Appeals ruling in the Elgin County case is perhaps a clearer statement about the purposes of public schooling than the actions of those who still wish to appear to be 'kind of Christian' and hope that no one will complain about Christmas concerts.

But clear statements by courts and public school officials do not guarantee clear directions in the classrooms of public schools. The question, "Did God really create the world?" will still be asked and demands an answer, an explanation, or an invitation to enquiry. An unequivocal yes or no will still be given by some teachers

who believe quite strongly one way or the other and consider it their duty to provide clear answers. Curriculum materials, especially those dealing with origins will inevitably need to answer the question either blatantly by denying the Creation account or through neglect by not mentioning it as a possibility alongside of the evolutionary theory. Teachers might also elect to answer by saying that this is a private matter to be answered only by individuals or individual families, or they might suggest that this is not an issue to be discussed in school, only at home or church. This constitutes a definite non-answer to the question but a very pointed lesson in the liberal worldview and doctrine; i.e. religious beliefs are private matters and do not affect what is learned in (public) schools. No teacher can escape leading or influencing the child in a particular direction in matters of morality, lifestyle, ethics and so on; which direction it will be must be made clear to children and to parents. As Weeren (1986) points out, "Students so influenced and informed are not deprived of their freedom of choice, but are given a better chance of exercising that freedom wisely" (p. 21).

A healthy debate continues amongst liberals as to the nature of schooling and the roles played by parents, the state, and the students (Gutman, 1980, Strike, 1990, Crittenden, 1989, Callan, 1988, Walker, 1988). Such debate will be most fruitful if it can be agreed that public schools serve liberal purposes whatever those may be from time to time. Parents who choose such an education for their children should be free to do so without prejudice and may expect no denominational point of view to predominate. But the education their children receive will not be neutral, it will be an education in and through the eyes of a liberal perspective and doctrine.

The same holds true for denominational schools. Liberal educators by their own standards of tolerance and understanding may not immediately suspect and charge denominational schools of unwarranted indoctrination simply because these schools are not promoting liberal principles of individualism, neutrality and autonomy of thought. MacInnis (1993) summarizes the positions of liberals who make such claims, such as Barrow (1981), who argues that it is "wrong to teach as true, propositions which are not known to be true" (p. 163), Flew (1966), who argues that "indoctrination...is a matter of trying to implant firm convictions of the truth of doctrines which are in fact either false or at least not known to be true" (p. 305), and Gribble (1969), who argues that religious education is indoctrinatory because it entails "the passing on of a body or set of beliefs which rest on assumptions which are either false or for which no publicly accepted evidence is or can be provided" (p. 34). MacInnis counters such arguments by suggesting that it is reasonable even by liberal standards to see those who engage in religious education properly doing so on the basis of propositions that are *believed* to be true; the burden of having to prove religious propositions on publicly accepted evidence is not one that religious schools must meet according to MacInnis, especially, since it cannot be done. (p. 39,40).

More recent liberal writings are not as ardent in their view of indoctrination in denominational schools. Callan (1988) who takes liberal thought to its extreme by suggesting that children have anticipatory autonomy rights which must be respected in schools, nevertheless agrees that a strong argument can be made by those who hold that:

> An adequate moral theory would accord greater importance to the ideal of community than autonomy, and hence give us reason to prize denominational schools as a means of fostering commitment to the communities they serve. (p. 380)

Although Callan does not accept such an argument himself, he nevertheless concedes that it can be honourably held by faith communities who do not share his liberal framework.

Strike (1990) in his review of Crittenden (1988) questions whether the liberal commitment to rationality is "sufficiently strong so as to override the educational choices of parents whose way of life is not strongly committed to rationality" (p. 243). He also questions whether there is only one kind of rationality or whether, as MacIntyre (1988) suggests:

> That rationality is always internal to traditions and that apart from a tradition there is no rationality. As a consequence, those who have not been initiated into some tradition cannot engage in rational choice at all. (p. 246)

In addition to such a philosophical argument, liberals who persist in levelling charges of indoctrination at denominational schools must also account for the fact that public schools also teach dogma, all be it liberal dogma such as the CALM curriculum described in Chapter 2. Further, the psychological claim that denominational schools inhibit people's autonomy as adults is an empirical claim which has not yet been supported and which is questionable since most religious groups themselves require that free choices or professions of faith be made by people once they reach adulthood.

Being closed minded in terms of one's allegiance to God as Thomist and Calvinist schools ought to be if they are doing what is asked of them, does not

necessarily imply a lack of openmindedness regarding the meaning and results of such a belief. Similarly, being closed minded about the need for autonomy for all children at all times in their lives even by way of anticipatory autonomous rights of children (Callan, 1988) is equally dogmatic. The question then is not an either autonomy of thought/or no autonomy of thought nor is it either religious/or not religious. A committed Christian can strive to be and to educate for as much autonomy as possible in his/her own growth and in the growth of children. Those who argue for maximum autonomy of thought from birth on must lower their expectations for complete autonomy since no one, young or old, is entirely free from their upbringing, tradition and education (Thiessen, 1993, p. 143).

Each child is born into a culture, a tradition, and a language. Through the early years, the child cannot avoid learning that language, the beliefs of the parents, community, and so on. Schools will aid parents in continuing this education. This provides children with a definite base, a foundation, a tradition which gives them a religious, sociological, political, etc. grounding. As age and maturity warrants, children must be presented with ideas and with people who do not see life as they do. More and more, reasons must be given as to why people differ in many fundamental issues and these must be understood by the children necessarily from out of the beliefs they have inherited and have accepted to this point. As age and maturity increase further, critical awareness and rational autonomy must be given every opportunity to grow and to be fostered in the classroom and in the home. Parenthetically, if it is not, it might grow on its own and explode anyway in highly irrational and uninformed

ways - but this is not ideal. Complete rational autonomy will never be reached by any person, so we cannot make that the criterion of whether indoctrination or influence carried to excess has taken place.

Many teaching methods such as rote learning, recitation of patriotic verse, true or false choices and memorization of Scripture are not necessarily indoctrinative but may be part of the growth of wisdom and a step towards critical awareness and decision making. Censorship of books, ideas and vulgarities takes place in any school at any time since everyone needs to select and to make choices regarding what happens in the home and in the classroom. One can therefore talk about 'too much' or 'too little' censorship taking place, but it is always a matter of degree for any parent or educator. Similarly, every parent and teacher inevitably 'indoctrinates' in the sense of imposing some beliefs, but the justifiability of such 'indoctrination' at any point can be questioned in terms of its degree in relation to the age and maturity of the child or the veracity and responsibility of the beliefs being taught. This is as true in relation to the teaching of science and art as it is to the teaching of religion and faith since, indeed, as Walker (1988) writes, "to live is to value" (p. 101). As Thiessen (1993) argues:

> All teaching, whether in the home or in the school, is "evangelistic" in nature. Convictions about truth are by their very nature such that we want to persuade others of our convictions. To deny this is to be dishonest. But we can and should persuade others only in such a way that recognizes the need to be open and critical about these same convictions, because, after all, we only "see through a glass darkly," we only "know in part." Our concern for truth should therefore always combine teaching for commitment with teaching for critical openness. (p.172)

The school's status as being <u>in loco parentis</u> demands that it should never

become an agent of unjustified indoctrination or undue influence from any perspective, secular, religious or otherwise. But arguing that by leading children into their lives through Christian means is inherently wrong or, as Barrows and Woods (1975) suggest, is unjustified total indoctrination and therefore wrong, is not helpful in defining the process of educating all children at any given time or place. As Weeren (1986) points out:

> Educating religiously is an historically defensible, natural component of schooling, inseparable from secular education, synergetic with moral education, and consistent with students' freedom to learn. (p. 95)

Conclusion

Tolerance and understanding will not necessarily flourish in any society, since they depend on the good will of each citizen and of social policy. Contrary to the suspicions of some, the evidence indicates that religious schooling does not necessarily foster intolerance and prejudice. In fact, tolerance may well grow more readily in such schools. Teaching children in a Christian school that Christianity is the one, true religion while fostering understanding of other religions can in fact promote tolerance rather than work against it. Says Thiessen (1993):

> If I believe that there is only one God, the Christian God, I am of course committed to believing that religions that deny this are false. But this does not make me closed-minded. I can be quite open to considering contrary evidence, despite my present commitment. (p. 161)

Instances of intolerance can and will be found in all Canadian schools. The view that public schools promote tolerance through shared experiences is no more or less worthy on conceptual and empirical grounds than the view that religious schools

promote tolerance. Precisely because "the religion of every prince is orthodox unto himself" (Locke 1689, p. 129), the state must ensure that both public and denominational schools are free to flourish.

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